

DN disabilitynow

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DRC could sue government over health

BY JOHN PRING

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is threatening to sue the government if it fails to address “shocking” inequalities faced by people with learning difficulties and mental health problems in primary healthcare.

The DRC has revealed the results of an 18-month formal investigation*, which found that people with learning difficulties and mental health problems in England and Wales are more likely to experience major illnesses, develop serious health conditions at an earlier age and to die of them sooner.

The DRC told DN that the Department of Health and primary care trusts had one year to secure major improvements – or face action under the Disability Discrimination Act’s new disability equality duty, which comes into force in December.

The DRC said that “a wide range of current practices, iden-

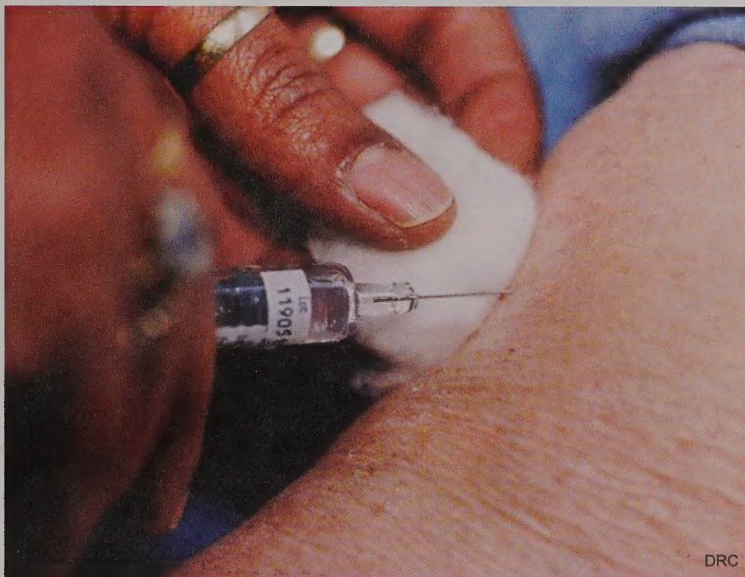
tified by the investigation, could clearly breach this duty”.

The panel that led the investigation will reconvene in one year to check progress. Recommendations for Wales will be launched this month.

Bert Massie, DRC chairman, said: “Tackling health inequalities is high on the government agenda, yet there has been a deeply inadequate response from health services and government to target these groups which, in some cases, is compounded by a dangerously complacent attitude and a lazy fatalism that they ‘just do’ die younger.”

A DRC spokeswoman added: “There have been white papers with a whole series of recommendations that have just laid idle.”

Among the findings, people with mental health problems have higher rates of obesity, smoking, heart disease, diabetes, respiratory disease and strokes, while those with schiz-



DRC

ophrenia are almost twice as likely to have bowel cancer.

People with learning difficulties have higher rates of obesity and respiratory diseases and “high levels of unmet health needs”. Both groups are less likely to receive some vital treatments and health checks and more than half face problems in trying to see their GP, such as the attitude of reception staff,

inflexible appointment systems and inaccessible information.

Andrew Lee, a member of the inquiry panel and director of People First (Self Advocacy), which is run by people with learning difficulties, was “not surprised”.

He accidentally overdosed on epilepsy medication two years ago because of a confusing letter about a change of dose.

He said the government was now in the “last chance saloon”.

The DRC called on the government to make urgent improvements, including introducing incentives for GPs, improved screening and enabling disabled people to record access needs on their medical records.

Health minister Rosie Winterton said the government agreed with the “broad thrust” of the recommendations and had “already started to act”, with £7million to improve the health of people with mental health problems and £42million allocated to help primary care trusts implement the learning difficulties white paper, *Valuing People*.

She said: “We will be working with the DRC to develop a full response to their report, which will be available at the turn of the year.”

*Equal treatment: closing the gap; for a copy, tel: 08457 622 633 or visit: www.drc-gb.org/healthinvestigation

Remploy workers ready for a fight

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Union representatives for Remploy workers have threatened to give the government a battle “that will make the miners’ strike of 1984 look like a kiddies’ tea party” if any of the company’s 81 factories close.

The struggle for Remploy’s future continued last month when union members demonstrated as Tony Blair arrived at the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Brighton.

The same day, a resolution by the GMB union to keep all of Remploy’s factories open was adopted as TUC policy.

Earlier in the month, leaders of the GMB and TGWU led more than 500 people in a march in Liverpool against the possible closure of any factories.

Les Woodward, an employee at Remploy’s Swansea factory

and representative of the Remploy Trade Union Consortium, told DN: “If Anne McGuire or any of the government think they are going to shut factories, then they will have a battle on their hands that will make the miners’ strike of 1984 look like a kiddies’ tea party.”

Remploy was told it needed to “modernise” by the government following a report from the National Audit Office last year, which said many factories were not good value for taxpayers’ money. The average annual subsidy for a Remploy factory worker is £18,000.

A government-commissioned review suggesting options including widespread factory closures was ignored, but Anne McGuire, minister for disabled people, has asked Remploy to devise a five-year plan that would support more disabled

people in work.

But factory workers fear being made redundant or being pushed into less-skilled jobs.

A GMB spokeswoman said the unions were starting talks with Remploy. She said: “We want all factories to stay open. The thing we want is for Remploy [factories] to be successful and we don’t see any reason why [they] can’t be.”

A Remploy spokeswoman would not confirm whether factories would close, but said the company was considering how to “significantly increase the number of disabled people we employ, for the same amount of money”.

A spokesman for the Department for Work and Pensions refused to comment on the “hypothetical situation” of a strike. He said: “We expect both sides to work together and come back with a plan.”



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On the cover: Deaf drag artist Mark Smith dazzles crowds at the Liberty Festival, as part of signed-singing trio The Alexandras. For a full report on the festival and more pictures see arts, page 24.

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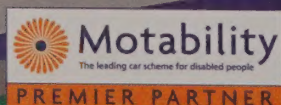
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ABC 19,022 1/7/04 - 30/6/05 **PPA**



Golden globes: Golden Lane Housing – linked to Mencap – celebrates nine years as a supported living environment for people with learning difficulties. From left, tenants Graham Smelt and Ford Dainty, manager Simon Parkinson, Mencap chief executive Jo Williams and Salford deputy mayor Val Burgoyne, at the event last month, part of Mencap's 60th birthday celebrations.

Doubts over new equality chief

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

The appointment of Trevor Phillips to chair the new joint equalities commission will be a "disaster" for equal rights, according to a leading disability campaigner.

Richard Reiser, director of Disability Equality in Education, said disabled people needed "a real champion" to fight for their rights and Mr Phillips was the wrong person for the role.

He said: "His appointment will be a disaster for the equality rights agenda. He's been watering down the concept of equality ever since he has been involved at the Commission for Racial Equality."

Mr Phillips, currently the head of Britain's race watchdog, will take up the £160,000

post at the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) in 2007.

The CEHR, established in February, will merge the duties of the separate equality commissions for disability, race equality and gender.

David Morris, senior disability policy adviser to the Mayor of London, was worried that the interim report of the Equalities Review – a body Mr Phillips chairs – showed "a great lack of knowledge about the social model" and contained "nothing on independent living or inclusive education".

He added: "If Trevor Phillips' approach to disabled people's rights is reflected in the interim review, than it shows that there will be problems."

Another key disabled cam-

paigner, who asked not to be named, had serious doubts about the recruitment process and felt Mr Phillips did not fully understand disability "as part of the human rights agenda".

Andy Rickell, head of diversity, politics and planning at Scope, agreed the review did not sufficiently represent disability issues, but added: "The CEHR will be a learning process. Everybody, including Trevor, will be learning."

Bert Massie, chairman of the DRC, said: "We need a clear break from the past, with no more special pleading but equality and human rights acknowledged as intrinsic to Britain's prosperity, security and well-being."

Mr Phillips was not available for comment.

2012 legacy under threat, says report

Disabled people risk losing out on the London 2012 Paralympic Games and its lasting legacy unless action is taken now, according to a new report*.

The London Assembly report, backed by mayor Ken Livingstone, highlights the need for dramatic improvement, blaming inaccessible sports facilities, lack of training and equipment for coaches and the attitudes of school staff.

Dee Doocey, chair of the committee that produced last month's report, said: "It's a disgrace that talented children with

disabilities are missing out."

She called for better training for PE teachers, additional funding and accessible sporting facilities in every borough.

It came after London 2012 organisers pledged to set new standards in British Paralympic sport, when they marked the six-year countdown to the games in August.

Lord (Sebastian) Coe, chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, set out his vision for London 2012, including more opportunities for dis-

abled people to play sport.

He said: "London will host the best ever Paralympic Games in 2012 and ensure that a lasting legacy is left for sport for people with a disability."

And the British Paralympic Association has helped launch an initiative to provide opportunities for disabled serving and ex-service personnel to compete. **London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: a sporting legacy for people with disabilities; for a copy, tel: 020 7983 4100 or visit www.london.gov.uk/assembly*

Sativex at the last hurdle

DN CAMPAIGN



Campaigners have welcomed an announcement that could see the cannabis-based spray Sativex licensed in the UK within a year.

GW Pharmaceuticals (GWP), which produces the spray, has applied to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency – the UK's drugs regulatory body – for Sativex to be licensed in the UK, Spain, Denmark and Netherlands to treat spasticity in people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Under the procedure, the UK

will consult with regulatory bodies in the three other countries. If successful, Sativex could be prescribed to treat other MS symptoms such as pain and given to people with arthritis and cancer if a doctor thinks it would help.

GWP has pushed for a UK licence since 2003. The spray was made available on a named patient basis last November, but many people have found it difficult to obtain the drug.

An MS Society spokesman said: "It's time for cannabis-based medicines to be made available on the NHS."

Study finds good work can help disabled people

Government-funded research concludes that being in work is usually good for physical and mental health.

The review* of evidence finds work can be therapeutic for disabled people and is "generally good for health and well-being", although this depends on the nature and quality of the work.

Last month's publication comes as the government tries to get one million people off incapacity benefit.

Sue Christoferou, of Mind, said the report makes it clear that "the benefits of employment depend on whether or not one has a good job".

She said she was concerned that disabled people will be pushed into poor quality, low-skilled jobs to meet targets.

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Union backs call for more paramedics

A union has backed calls for funding to train more paramedics, after the death of a teenager with epilepsy.

Kayleigh Macilwraith-Christie, aged 15, from north London, died after an ambulance arrived without a paramedic to give her the injection that might have saved her life (*DN Extra*, September, page 2).

She did not receive the drug she needed until she reached the hospital 50 minutes after her first seizure, on 14 July.

Sam Oestreicher, of UNISON, said unions and bosses were working on a plan to train 2,000 more paramedics across England, but such a move would cost money.

Kayleigh's family and friends have started a petition* to persuade MPs to debate the issue and have secured 5,800 names.

*Email: michelle_greaves1@msn.com

Making every child matter

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

Disabled children and their families deserve improved services, according to a new campaign.

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM), due to be launched at the Labour Party conference in Manchester, will focus on ensuring disabled children and their families receive the services and support they need, such as short breaks, key workers and the right to a quality education.

The campaign is backed by the Council for Disabled Children, Contact A Family, Mencap and the Special Education Consortium.

Francine Bates, chief executive of Contact A Family, said: "Parents and families caring for disabled children have a very tough time. Many families face poverty and hardship.

"We must urgently address this deep injustice and ensure that every disabled child matters."

The campaign will run over the next three years, funded by



Support at last: One of the disabled children who could benefit from the campaign

a £400,000 grant from Sainsbury's True Colours Trust.

Before the end of the year, the campaign will introduce a private members bill to create a minimum entitlement to short breaks for families with disabled children.

An EDCM spokesman said the group had been working closely with the Treasury ahead of its next spending review and expects an acknowledgement of the poor services disabled

children receive as well as funding and recommendations.

EDCM hopes the involvement of economic secretary Ed Balls, who was due to speak at the launch, will boost the campaign's political objectives.

Mr Balls introduced a ten-minute rule bill in the last session of parliament, calling for short breaks, respite care and more effective assessments for disabled children.

Complaints mounting against Stagecoach buses

A major UK coach operator has come under fire after complaints from disabled passengers.

Stagecoach, which runs approximately 7,300 buses across the UK, has been criticised by wheelchair user Mary Laver, from Newcastle, who said some bus drivers were not trained in operating ramps or refused to use them.

Ms Laver said managers were helpful but she still faces the same treatment. "I encounter problems nearly every time I use the bus."

John Frazer, operations manager for Stagecoach, said all drivers receive disability awareness training and further training or disciplinary action is taken in individual cases.

Meanwhile, Andrea Powrie, from Morayshire, Scotland, has complained that her local Stagecoach Bluebird (SB) service has room for only one wheelchair and she has been advised to book a week in advance.

Ms Powrie said: "I do not like the idea of having to arrange when I go out."

An SB spokeswoman said

there were no plans to increase the number of wheelchair places.

A Disability Rights Commission spokeswoman said new parts of the Disability Discrimination Act, which come into force in December, will protect against "gratuitous discrimination" on public transport, although this won't affect the number of wheelchair places.

In brief

U-turn on exam access

The government's exams body has reversed its decision to scrap adjustments that enabled deaf pupils to be more fairly assessed in their GCSEs and A-levels.

Following a campaign led by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) said deaf students would be allowed exemptions from listening exams.

But it has yet to reinstate the use of oral communicators, who help deaf students lip-read listening modules.

The NDCS welcomed the move but said the QCA had "already done real harm" and refusing to reinstate oral communicators could further damage deaf students.

Plan to tackle exclusion

The government has said it will "accelerate" measures to boost employment prospects for people with severe mental health problems, as part of an action plan on social exclusion.

The *Reaching Out* plan, launched last month by social exclusion minister Hilary Armstrong, includes encouraging individual job placements and anti-stigma campaigns. There will also be a series of pilots to test different approaches to tackling mental health and conduct disorders in childhood.

Baby's death investigated

A doctor who admitted suffocating a disabled baby in 1972 is under investigation.

The doctor wrote an article in *New Society* magazine in 1988, under the pseudonym Ivy Walker, detailing how she held a pillow over the newborn's face in a north London hospital.

Scotland Yard has confirmed it is in the early stages of an investigation.

BUPA fined for failings

The health and care provider BUPA has been fined £90,000 for failings that led to the death of an older disabled woman.

Charlotte Wood, who was 95, slipped from a bath hoist at Abbotsleigh Mews residential home in Sidcup, Kent, in 2003. She fractured her shoulder and later died from pneumonia in hospital.

BUPA Care Homes was found guilty of a health and safety offence, after a court heard of a string of failings in the home's manual handling and lifting procedures.

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UN treaty is victory for human rights

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

A United Nations (UN) treaty to protect the human rights of disabled people is one step away from being voted in by its general assembly.

The final text of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* was agreed by a committee in August, after five years of negotiations.

The aim is to secure the rights of disabled people in areas such as access to justice, education, health services and transport. Member states are expected to ratify the treaty in December.

Disability campaigners have welcomed the treaty as "a major victory" and a way to hold the UK government accountable over its disability policies.

While the convention is not legally binding, campaigners hope the attention it brings will force member states to act.

After ratification, a UN monitoring body will judge whether governments are fulfilling their obligations, based partly on a report from disabled people's organisations in each country.

Tara Flood, director of the Alliance for Inclusive Education, said: "Now it is

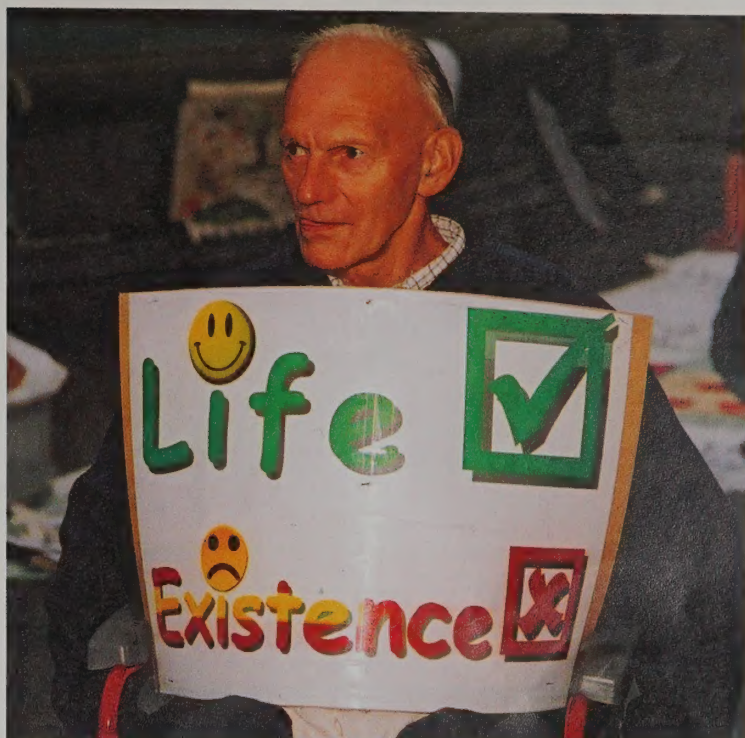
down to disabled people and our organisations and how we interpret and use [the treaty] to support campaigns we are already working on."

She hopes the convention, which says disabled people should have the right to inclusive education, will force the UK government to set a time-frame for this to be achieved.

Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said the convention would be a way for the UN to probe inequalities in areas such as healthcare, education and work.

*www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable

Fighting funding cuts



Disabled campaigners protested in Trafalgar Square amid further funding pressure on disabled people's organisations and services.

The protest (above) by the Our Lives R4 Living campaign took place last month during London's Liberty Festival.

Ian Loynes, director of Southampton Centre for Independent Living, said: "It's all well and good to have central government [recognise the issue], but local authorities hold the purse strings and they can decide non user-led organisations are better value for money."

Meanwhile, a report from the Royal College of Language Therapists revealed that 78 per cent of UK speech and lan-

guage therapists have had their budgets reduced or frozen.

Northamptonshire County Council announced it will cut costs by ending respite services for people with learning difficulties at two centres. From this month the council will also start to charge for all social care services not deemed "critical" or "greater substantial".

Islington Council in London is consulting on increasing charges for home care services. Councillor John Gilbert said: "Sadly we don't live in a perfect world and have limited resources, which we must use as fairly and effectively as we can."

And Bradford Metropolitan District Council plans to cut its budget deficit by increasing care charges.

Airline restrictions disrupt holiday plans

A disabled woman has been forced to cancel her flight due to "ridiculous" airline weight restrictions which state that her wheelchair is too heavy.

EasyJet told Clare Gray, from Gloucestershire, that her electric wheelchair could not be carried on a flight from Bristol to Newcastle as it exceeded the company's 60kg weight limit.

Ms Gray said: "I've flown with lots of airlines but I've never had a weight restriction. Surely this is affecting other disabled people. It's ridiculous."

An easyJet spokeswoman

denied discrimination. She said heavy cargo lifting equipment does not fit into easyJet baggage holds as its planes are smaller than other airlines. She claims easyJet has received no more than two requests in the last six years for transportation of "such heavy wheelchairs".

A Disability Rights Commission (DRC) spokeswoman said the incident was "unfortunate". She said the DRC wants air travel covered by the Disability Discrimination Act because the voluntary code was "clearly not working".

Keith Richards, of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, said: "Few of the no frills operators have signed up to the voluntary air access code."

European Union regulations, coming into force next July, will mean carriers must take electric wheelchairs, subject to a 48-hour warning and space limitations.

Mr Richards said: "It is too early to know what this will mean in specific cases, but it will outlaw discrimination unless there are genuine and compelling reasons."

Dame Jane leads IL review panel

Of of the UK's leading disability rights campaigners will head the government's review of independent living (IL) policy (DN, August, page 1).

Dame Jane Campbell will chair the expert panel set up to identify "imaginative and practical solutions to support IL for disabled people".

Rob Greig, national director for learning difficulties, will be vice-chair, with other members including: DRC commissioner Saghir Alam; Frances Hasler, former director of the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL); Raymond Johnson, national manager of People First (Self Advocacy); and NCIL chair Menghi Mulchandani.

Dame Jane said: "The remit is ambitious but I am confident that together we can achieve significant developments in pushing forward independent living for all disabled people, so we can participate fully in society."

Detailed proposals are expected next summer.

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Railcard extended

The disabled persons railcard (DPR) has marked its 25th anniversary by extending its coverage to more disabled people.

At an event co-hosted last month by BT, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) extended eligibility to include people who claim all rates of Disability Living Allowance and long-term claimants of Incapacity Benefit. The change could benefit 160,000 more disabled people.

ATOC also introduced a new three-year DPR. One-year cards will still be available.

Transport minister Gillian Merron said: "The disabled persons railcard has encouraged disabled passengers to make journeys that they might otherwise have felt were unaffordable."

ATOC expects the number of railcard users to pass 100,000 next year.

At the launch, honorary railcards were awarded to assistance dog owner Allen Parton, RADAR chief executive Kate Nash and Alice Maynard, former head of disability strategy at Network Rail.



Pictured (from left to right): Andrew Haines, chairman of ATOC's disability working group; David Sindall, ATOC's head of disability and inclusion; Allen Parton and Endal; Kate Nash; Gillian Merron; and Alice Maynard

The trio were said to have made a "significant contribution" to encouraging disabled people to use the rail system.

ATOC and RADAR also launched a new award for the best train operating company,

to be voted for by disabled passengers on the railcard website*. The winner will be announced in December at RADAR's annual human rights awards dinner.

* www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

DRC criticised for 'neglecting' its full powers

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has dropped the ball on enforcing anti-discrimination law, according to new research.

The report* by the Public Interest Research Unit (PIRU) criticised the DRC, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It said the DRC had used only two out of its seven enforcement powers since 1999.

It said: "The DRC's neglect of its enforcement powers, along with the difficulties individuals face in taking legal action themselves, has helped ensure that the majority of discriminators have got away with committing unlawful acts."

Author Rupert Harwood said the DRC should be establishing the Disability Discrimination Act through court cases, tribunals and serving non-discrimination notices.

Mr Harwood said: "The

point is that if you have [law] that seldom has enforcement, a substantial percentage of employers can ignore [the law]."

He said PIRU was concerned about whether the future Commission for Equality and Human Rights will make use of its enforcement powers as rarely as the DRC.

But the DRC called the report a "crude measure of the commission's effectiveness".

A DRC spokeswoman said: "It would be ludicrous to suggest – as the report implies – that after winning the argument with people who have responsibilities under the law we would then bludgeon them into submission by taking legal action. This would be a pointless waste of public money."

Lynn Welsh, head of Scottish legal affairs for the DRC, said that "number counting" was a simplistic evaluation of the DRC's work.

* *Teeth and their use. For a copy, tel: 01559 370 395 or email: info@piru.org.uk*

Call for prescription charges to be scrapped

Campaigners in Scotland have called for prescription charges to be axed for people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB), because they are forcing them to choose between their health and other necessities.

A report* from Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) – an umbrella body for all Citizen Advice Bureaux in Scotland – showed that less than a third of respondents on sickness or disability benefits were exempt from prescription charges.

The report, published in August, highlighted research by

UNISON which showed that 75,000 prescriptions are not dispensed each year in Scotland due to cost.

Concessions which required one-off payments to provide prescriptions throughout the year were too costly for some people on benefits, said CAS.

CAS chief executive Kaliani Lyle said: "The basic prescription charge is currently £6.50, but even as a one-off payment this can be a significant amount for someone on incapacity benefit. And the problem is worse if they require multiple or repeat prescriptions

because of chronic, complex or severe health conditions."

A Scottish Executive spokeswoman admitted the current exemption arrangements contained "anomalies" and were "no longer fit for purpose".

She said: "That is why we have made a commitment to review prescription charges for people on low incomes, people in education and training and people with chronic medical conditions – part of which has involved an extensive public consultation."

* *Paying the Price; visit www.cas.org.uk*

MEPs back report on mental healthcare

People with mental health problems should have access to improved healthcare services at work and in the community, according to the European Parliament.

MEPs voted in favour of proposals by Conservative MEP John Bowis, who was responding to last October's mental health green paper.

His report* calls for a group

to collect information on mental health practice and promotion in the EU. It says employers should introduce mental health policies and for these to be published and monitored.

Mr Bowis said: "It is time to bite the bullet and recognise that health is a cross border issue."

* *Draft report on improving the mental health of the population; www.europarl.europa.eu*



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Euro diabetes report may lead to driving ban

BY ELIZABETH CHOPPIN

People with insulin-treated diabetes should be barred from driving emergency vehicles, according to controversial European guidance published in August.

Campaigners and disability groups were enraged after a report* from the European Commission Working Group on Diabetes recommended people with insulin-treated diabetes should not be allowed to drive ambulances, fire engines or police cars.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has not officially responded to the report yet but campaigners are concerned that the new guidance could lead to the introduction of a "blanket ban".

Existing DVLA guidance states that drivers with insulin-treated diabetes should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Claire Francis, public affairs officer for Diabetes UK, said adopting the recommendation could lead to a "ban" because employers would not want to contradict DVLA guidance.

Ms Francis said that criteria should look at an individual's management of the condition, their hypoglycaemic awareness and whether they are



showing signs of long-term complications.

She added: "We believe this recommendation is discriminatory and clearly contravenes the letter and spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act. Rigorous individual assessment is the fair and safe way to ascertain a person's ability to drive, including driving in emergency conditions."

Diabetes UK has made a submission to the DVLA and will survey ambulance trusts on their current policies and whether they are following existing guidance.

A DVLA spokeswoman said it was too early to comment on the impact of the report, as it will be discussed in detail by a working group early next year.

**Diabetes and driving in Europe; for a copy, tel: 0870 6000301 or visit: www.dvla.gov.uk/medical/*



Helping hands: Stefan Williams and his mum Maria read a new handbook for young carers created for members of the Kids Young Carers Hounslow project in Middlesex. The handbook, launched in late August by the charity Kids, includes advice on relationships, contact details for counselling services and sexual health information.

Call for birth register to cover the country

The government should introduce compulsory regional registers of babies born with congenital impairments, according to a disabled children's charity.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics show that regions of England and Wales that already keep registers are nearly three times as likely to report such births.

The rate of babies notified from the nine regions with registers in 2004 was 149.6 per 10,000 live and stillbirths.

But in the regions without registers, the rate of babies with congenital impairments reported was only 51.9 per 10,000.

At present, the areas not covered by regional registers are Lancashire, Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent and Sussex.

Sheila Brown, chief executive of BDF Newlife, said: "Setting up regional registers which would cover the whole of the

country – not just part of the population as now – is the only way we can find out the true scale of birth defects in this country."

She said such information helps to improve child health, detect local clusters of babies born with specific conditions and help plan services.

She said: "It has long been acknowledged that there is under-reporting of these conditions and it's time that changed."

Last year, the chief medical officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, said the registers were "a vital public health tool".

He is currently looking at the possibility of registers covering the entire country.

He said: "We are still considering the report and its recommendations, in view of the other options available and the need to identify the costs of taking this project forward."

Cornwall still has access hurdles for disabled residents

Disabled people in Cornwall still face barriers despite disability discrimination laws, according to a new report.

The report* was funded by the charity Scope and produced by Awareness of Disability JUSTice (ADJust), a group that operates under Cornwall Disability Forum.

The report aims to address access issues in a range of services in Cornwall and to raise disabled people's expectations of service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Findings show over 60 per cent of 372 disabled survey respondents think access to local amenities is a problem.

About a third wanted improved parking at GP surgeries and hospitals and 69 per cent did not use public transport due to access problems.

Access at pubs and restaurants is an issue for about half the respondents and a third feel cinemas need to make access improvements.

Vaughan Tenby, projects and services manager of ADJust, said: "[The report] was used to raise awareness that, although there has been some progress, there are still a lot of things that need to be improved. It is now down to us to take it up to the next level."


**Assessing the Disability Discrimination Act in Cornwall. For more information, tel: 01736 360 068*

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Social care bosses fail on adult protection

DN CAMPAIGN

BY JOHN PRING

Social services chiefs have failed to address the omission of vital information from their own "comprehensive" national standards on adult protection.

Last year, *DN* told the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) that its new standards failed to mention the criminal offences of ill-treatment and neglect of adults with learning difficulties and mental health problems.

The offences were used to secure prison sentences for care staff involved in major abuse scandals such as the Bedes

View and Longcare cases.

But Dwayne Johnson, chair of the ADSS's safeguarding adults network, said the organisation was now focusing on other issues, such as convincing the government to put its *No Secrets* vulnerable adult guidance on the same statutory basis as that for child protection and domestic violence. *No Secrets* also fails to mention the two offences.

Mr Johnson said the ADSS had "moved on" since its standards were launched last October and now needed to examine how to increase the number of successful prosecutions for abuse of vulnerable adults.

He said: "The issue we were finding within the ADSS is we were not getting the number of prosecutions that we would have hoped [for]."

But Mr Johnson admitted that he was unaware of the special measures – gradually introduced by the government since 2002 – which aim to help vulnerable witnesses through the criminal justice system.

Mr Johnson told *DN*: "I need to do some further investigatory work."

When *DN* asked him to explain exactly why the ADSS had failed to act over the omission of the two offences from its standards, he declined to comment further.



Champagne moment: Claire Somerville has become the 1,000th person to receive Direct Payments from Kent County Council. Ms Somerville (centre), from Tunbridge Wells, is pictured with Kevin Lynes, the council's cabinet member for adult services, and care manager Kirstine Mitchell.

Millions allocated to new business initiative

A new £3million initiative is set to help 600 disabled people start their own businesses.

Ready to Start* – a joint three-year project by the disability charity Leonard Cheshire and Barclays – will see each disabled person supported by a mentor from the high street bank and trained on subjects such as accounts, marketing and developing a business plan.

The project – funded by Barclays – will be introduced in 27 towns and cities across England and Wales, with the first scheme to be launched in

London this month.

Linda Holland, national project manager for Ready to Start, said: "For a large number of disabled people, setting up their own business is often the only viable option in order to achieve both economic independence and a flexible working environment."

*For more information, tel: 020 7802 8200, email: linda.holland@lc-uk.org or visit: www.leonardcheshire.org/readytostart ● See this month's supplement, *Wise up to Work*, for more on disabled entrepreneurs.

Too many carers at breaking point, says Mencap

A report* has called for urgent action to tackle the continued lack of short-term breaks for carers of children and adults with learning difficulties.

The report from the charity Mencap – published in August – showed seven out of ten families have come close to or reached "breaking point" because of a lack of support.

The survey of 353 families from England and Northern Ireland also showed six out of ten families do not get a short break that meets their needs.

The results show little change since 2003, when Mencap reported eight in ten families to be at "breaking point".

Mencap called for the government to address the problem through its 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review and set a "minimum standard" which would entitle families in the greatest need to an average of at least one break a week.

Jo Williams, Mencap's chief executive, said: "Central government must provide increased funding so that families can take full advantage of short break services provided to them or purchase a break themselves."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Health re-iterated its pledge in this year's health and social care white paper to do more for carers, including ensuring short term home-based respite support to carers and funding for a new expert carers programme.

* *Breaking Point*. For a copy, tel: 020 7696 6900 or visit: www.mencap.org.uk/breakingpoint

Forum praised for 15 successful years

The minister for disabled people has praised the Employers' Forum on Disability for its efforts to encourage firms to recruit disabled people, as it celebrates its 15th anniversary.

Anne McGuire MP said the charity had "successfully made the economic case for adopting good working practices and promoting the belief that disability should be seen as an opportuni-

ty rather than a burden".

The forum, which aims to make it easier for businesses to employ disabled people and serve disabled customers, was launched in 1991 by the Prince of Wales.

Membership has grown from 12 in 1991 to about 400 private and public sector members, together employing about 20 per cent of the UK's workforce.

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Heroic pooch rewarded for bravery during bombing

A guide dog has been rewarded for helping his owner escape from Tavistock Square after last year's London bombing.

Tom was named heroic guide dog of the year, in the awards organised by The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and presented by David Blunkett MP.

His owner, Mike Townsend (pictured with Tom), from

Leicester, said: "When the bomb went off, I thought about my wife and daughter. My guide dog Tom just thought about getting me to safety."

The overall winner was Larry, a golden retriever Labrador cross, who has had "an enormous impact" on the life of his owner, Mark Pollock, from Banbridge, County Down.

Life-changing guide dog of the year was Ike, who helped Catriona Wilson, from Newquay, as she recovered from a kidney and pancreas transplant and developed a new career in reflexology.

And exceptional guide dog of the year was Logan, who helps owner Carl Griggs, from Birmingham.



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Hundreds denied Freedom passes

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

Hundreds of disabled people have been denied free travel in London, after a borough introduced strict new criteria for travel passes.

Under the rules, disabled people in Hammersmith and Fulham can be asked to attend a medical assessment if their impairment does not meet one of seven criteria for a Freedom pass.

Council figures show that, since assessments were introduced in April, 796 disabled people who were previously eligible have been rejected.

Other London boroughs are also believed to have tightened up their criteria.

Michael Gannon, who has had a Freedom pass since 2000, was told by Hammersmith and Fulham council to see a physiotherapist before his pass was renewed. After the assessment, Mr Gannon – who has a progressive condition that affects his ability to walk – was told he no longer qualifies. He has since received a Freedom pass due to being on the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance.

Faryal Velmi, campaigns and media officer for Transport for All, said they were "alarmed" by the council's policy.

She said: "It's definitely a cost-cutting measure and it means a large group of people in the borough are left without accessible transport services."

The council's cabinet member for health and social care, Antony Lillis, said: "In a bid to reduce misuse and maintain fairness we have changed the way we run our Freedom pass scheme to bring us into line with the majority of other London boroughs."

Ms Velmi said she had heard of other boroughs introducing similar measures.

Distressed woman told: 'no one could die from a lack of oxygen'

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

A disabled woman claims she "nearly died" because the company charged with delivering her oxygen supplies was too concerned with paperwork.

Arlene McKeever (*pictured*) had to wait more than five hours for Air Products Medical (APM) to deliver oxygen supplies during a holiday in Skegness, after her own oxygen concentrator broke down at 1am.

When she rang the company, she was told her previous prescription had been cancelled and the company would only deliver the oxygen when they received a fax from her GP.

One APM staff member allegedly told Ms McKeever that she was being "dramatic" and that "no one could die



from a lack of oxygen".

The company finally delivered the concentrator after Ms McKeever contacted an out-of-hours GP in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, where she lives.

The 46 year old, who has received oxygen treatment for 17 years, cut short her holiday and said she was "terrified" and "still having flashbacks".

She said: "I will never go on holiday again. I was on my last breath when they delivered the oxygen at 7.20am and

I could have died."

She said she never had problems until the government transferred the oxygen supply service from pharmacists to private companies in February.

She contacted us after reading about another DN reader who complained about APM (DN, September, page 10).

An APM spokeswoman apologised for the delays and said: "When patients go on holiday in a region we serve, we advise them not to transport the concentrator they use at home and instead rely on the one we will deliver with back-up cylinders."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Health said it was taking all possible steps to ensure that patients' home oxygen needs were being met.

£7 million boost to patient well-being

Patients with mental health problems are set to benefit from new services to improve their physical health, following the launch of new guidance* in August.

As part of the new Department of Health initiative, 88 "spearheaded" primary care trusts (PCT) will receive £7million to employ "well-being" nurses, who will work in

partnership with health professionals to deliver health checks and blood tests and give advice on diet and exercise.

The programme builds on successful pilots carried out in eight PCTs since 2004, which showed that appropriate support can help spot the early signs of diseases such as diabetes and help people with mental health problems

live healthier lives.

Sophie Corlett, policy director at mental health charity Mind, said: "While this guidance is welcome, we would like to see further clarity on funding its recommendations and how patients looked after by non 'spearheaded' PCTs will benefit."

* *Healthy body, healthier mind; for a copy, visit www.dh.gov.uk*

Speedy assessment of MS drug welcomed

Campaigners have welcomed a decision by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to speed up the assessment process for a new drug for people with severe forms of multiple sclerosis (MS).

As part of its forward work programme*, announced by the Department of Health in late August, NICE will be using its single technology appraisal (STA) process to assess Tysabri, a drug which could help thousands of patients with relapsing and remitting MS.

The STA process means the assessment of the drug's clinical and cost-effectiveness should take six months instead of the two years it would normally take.

Tysabri is available in the UK, as it received a European licence in June, but if approved by NICE it could be made available on prescription.

The drug was withdrawn from the US market in February last year, when three

of the 3,000 people taking part in a trial developed a disorder of the nervous system.

The MS Trust said it hoped NICE would examine the long-term safety and efficacy of Tysabri, which has not yet been "well documented".

Christine Jones, chief executive of the MS Trust, said: "After the very lengthy process that we had to endure with the NICE assessment of the current disease modifying drug therapies I am delighted that in this instance the process will be rapid."

Among other drugs to be examined under the STA process, NICE will assess Remicade for psoriasis and Xolair for asthma.

NICE has also been asked to produce guidance to help schools, employers and residential care institutions promote good mental health among their service users.

* *To read the full forward work programme, tel: 020 7064 5800 or visit: www.nice.org.uk*



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Matthew Alton from Aberdeen tests out a new robotic arm, which has the potential to teach and improve co-ordination for people with disorders such as dyspraxia.

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Action Medical Research is currently trialling the device at the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital.

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GB triumph at Tanni's last world champs

BY PRIYA KOTECHA

British Paralympic stars put on an impressive display at the IPC Athletics World Championships in Assen, Holland, coming home with 27 medals and fifth spot in the medals table, behind China, the USA, Australia and Ukraine.

David Weir and 16-time Paralympic Games medallist Tanni Grey Thompson – who announced that it would be her final world championships – led the charge, winning four gold medals between them on the track.

Weir started his campaign on day three of the competition, taking the title in the T54 400m race – for which he already holds the world record – and setting a new games record as he crossed the line in 48.06secs, almost a second ahead of Switzerland's Marcel Hug, who took silver.

Weir went on to win gold in the T54 1,500m, beating Mexico's Saul Mendoza in a time of 3mins 15.82secs on day four.

He completed his hat-trick of golds on day five, clocking a time of 14.34secs in the T54 100m, ahead of Dutch racer Kenny Van Weeghel.

Afterwards, Weir said: "I think that was my most satisfying win, as well as being the most difficult. The 100m isn't my favourite event."

Weir rounded off last month's championships with a



British medallists: Danny Crates (above), Shelley Woods (below) and Tanni Grey Thompson (far right)



silver medal in the T54 200m race, this time narrowly losing out to Van Weeghel.

Meanwhile, Tanni Grey Thompson finished her last

world championships in style, clinching a gold, silver and bronze out of four events.

She began with a silver medal in the T53 800m, behind Amanda McGrory of the USA.

The 800m world record holder battled an illness to cross the line second, in a time of 2mins 11.85secs.

She said: "I thought I would struggle to get a medal but if I pushed really well I could get bronze – so getting silver was really good."

The 37-year-old kept her focus, clinching gold in the T53 200m on day five and beating rivals Jessica Galli from the USA and Italy's Francesca Porcellato.

Thompson ended her final appearance with a bronze in the T53 400m, finishing behind Galli and McGrory in a

time of 59.91secs.

She said: "In the final 50m there was nothing left in the tank. I was flat out and I couldn't have done any more. This will be my last world [championships]. It's been a good championships and I think I've done alright here."

Another winning performance came from Danny Crates in the T46 800m title. He won gold in a time of 1min 54.92secs, beating Poland's Marcin Awizen.

The 33-year-old runner from Essex was thrilled with his performance. He said: "I wanted it so much and I piled the pressure on myself leading up to the championships – I was desperate to get my hands on the gold. It's a relief to know I've finally done it."

Shelly Woods rounded off Britain's medal-winning streak with a bronze in the T54 marathon on the final day of competition, finishing behind Diane Roy of Canada and Swiss Sandra Graf Mittelholzer.

In the field, Beverley Jones got Britain off to a good start, breaking the world record in the F37 shot on the first day.

The 31 year old from North Wales broke the record with her first throw of 9.37m, only for it to be bettered by Australian Amanda Fraser who threw 10.13m. But Jones went one better with her second throw, recording 10.57m, which gave her a gold and a world record.

She said: "I didn't feel under



Other medallists:

- David Gale, gold – F51 Discus
- Daniel Greaves, gold – F44 Discus
- John McFall, silver – T42 100m and bronze – T42 200m
- Tracy Hinton, bronze – T11 400m and silver – T11 800m
- Stephen Payton, bronze – T38 400m
- Sally Reddin, bronze – F54 shot put
- Ben Rushgrove, bronze – T36 200m
- Graeme Ballard, silver – T36 100m
- Elizabeth Clegg, silver – T12 200m
- Daniel West, silver – F34 shot and silver – F33/34 discus
- Kim Minett, bronze – F40 shot
- Hazel Robson, bronze – T36 200m

any pressure at all. I came into the championships feeling quite confident and I had a good training session beforehand."

Stephen Miller won his third consecutive world championship title in the F32/S1 club, after throwing it a distance of 32.56m, which broke the championship record.

Kenny Churchill failed to retain his F37 javelin title, narrowly missing out to Chinese thrower Xia Dong.

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Tennis – Cardiff Wheelchair Tournament

20-22 October

Venue Esporta Cardiff

More information Tel: 02920 759 023 or visit: www.btf.org.uk

Tennis – Indoor Wheelchair Tournament

2-5 November

Venue Nottingham Tennis Centre

More information Tel: 020 8878 6464 or visit: www.itftennis.com

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4-5 November

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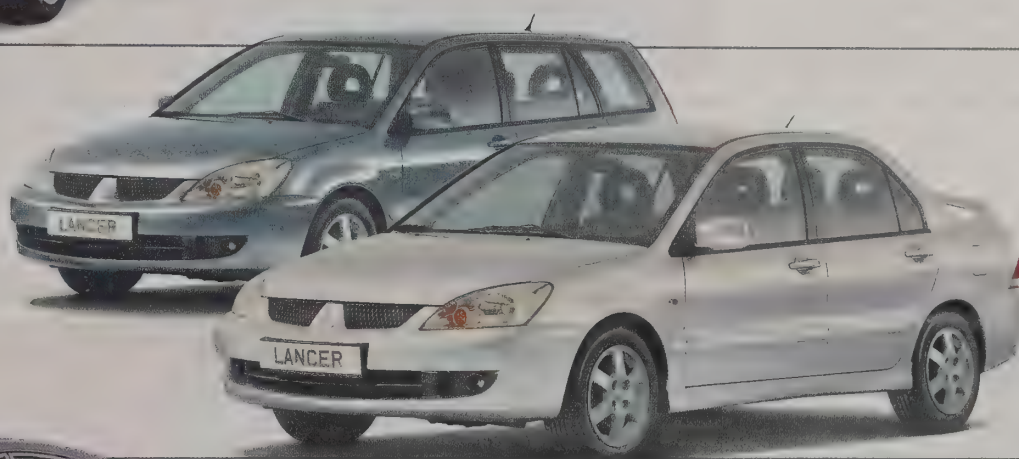
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CELEB SCENE

FRANCESCA MARTINEZ

Shocking, but true, there is a life without television and it may free you up to discover your creative side

When you inform someone that you don't have a television, the inevitable response you get – tinged with the sort of shock one might experience upon seeing an alien descend into the garden – is: "But what do you do all day?"

This question is as revealing as it is predictable. Whenever I was asked this as a teenager, I could imagine the scene conjured up in the mind of the recipient of my news: a room in which my family and I were sitting around, looking bored and dejected, staring into space.

Weirder still for my bemused classmates was the fact that I was on television for five years – I appeared on *Grange Hill* without actually having a TV to watch myself on. Incomprehensible!

It was too much for many people to consider that when

you grow up without a television, you might actually have fun doing other things.

For a start, you get to know those other people who inhabit your home – your family.

You read books, write stories, make plays and draw pictures (I would

'The time I had as a result of not having a TV played no small part in determining my career'

include singing in this list, if only I hadn't been blessed with the sort of singing voice that makes *X-Factor* auditions so freakishly entertaining).

To be honest, having had a TV since the age of 18, I have developed some sympathy for those who experienced an existential crisis at the realisation that not every kid had a TV.

I have certainly made up

for lost time, having spent many a weekend feeding my addiction to DVD box-sets such as *24*, *The West Wing* and *The Office*.

But this, I think, is the important point – TV is incredibly addictive. It is the real world equivalent of the fictional drug – "soma" – described in Aldous Huxley's, *Brave New World*.

It prevents us from developing our own social and creative skills.

I certainly feel that the extra time my brother and I had to ourselves during our childhood, as a result of not having a TV, played no small part in determining the careers we have ended up in – an artist and stand-up comedian.

Finally, a message to all of those parents who want their children to have unstable and highly insecure but creative careers – throw away your TV.

Francesca is a comedian and is working with the BBC on a television show based on her life



YOUTH SPEAK

IVY BROADHEAD

It is not everyday you end up in the arms of *Big Brother's* Pete

Yet again, after promising myself I wasn't going to watch it, I got sucked into this year's *Big Brother* (BB). This time, there was an important difference: it was my professional obligation – and not just guilty pleasure – to watch trash TV. Otherwise, I wouldn't be qualified to write the BB updates on the DN website, now would I?

As the final loomed, and we all began to wonder what on earth we were going to watch once the series ended, DN received an invitation to the final. In a potentially risky expression of faith, they chose to send me along to cover it, rather than someone who might've actually known what they were doing.

This was the first major event I had been asked to cover, so, slightly intimidated and very excited, I trundled off to the Elstree studios in Hertfordshire.

Pete Bennett – who has Tourette syndrome – was

declared the winner and launched himself out of the BB house with the same slapstick silliness with which he went in.

After lots of fireworks, an interview with Davina and a few minutes to catch their breath – while we journalists all took advantage of the free food – the freshly evicted housemates attended a press conference.

I couldn't help but notice that, despite the fact that Pete is BB's first disabled housemate, I seemed to be the only disabled journalist.

Since I am unable to stand for long periods, and all of the seats were taken, I ended up sitting by the feet of some of the earlier reporters, totally obscured by a cameraman, which meant I was unable to ask any questions.

I might not have asked any probing questions, but I did get a hug and kiss from the man himself, and that – plus the BB knickers I got in my goody bag – made my night.

Ivy, 18, lives in London and is acting editorial assistant at DN



WORLD VIEW

RICHARD HOWITT

Finally, a historic victory for disabled people's human rights

Intense lobbying during the supposed summer "quiet season" has achieved the biggest ever advancement for worldwide disability rights.

After years of campaigning, the United Nations (UN) has approved the world's first Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This historic convention – the first human rights treaty of the 21st century – will be formally adopted at the session of the UN General Assembly that began last month, after which it will be open for signature and ratification by each member state, including the UK.

The new convention enshrines rights for disabled people in international law, replacing welfare and charity, and aims to help disabled people achieve dignity.

For the first time, the convention applies all the basic human rights provided in earlier treaties to all

disabled people. This includes prohibition of discrimination and access to justice, education and health services.

All countries ratifying the convention must introduce measures to advance disability rights and stamp out discrimination.

The European Union and disability rights campaigners across Europe helped to make this convention a reality.

For campaigners in Britain, the next step should be to raise awareness of the convention and argue for its use as a powerful lever towards gaining comprehensive legislation protecting and promoting the rights of disabled Europeans.

The UK can also lead by example in ratifying the convention and its optional protocol without delay.

Without doubt, this is a fantastic and historic victory for 650 million disabled people across the globe.

Richard is president of the European Parliament's All-Party Disability Rights Group and a Labour politician in Europe



TOP TALK

JANE CAMPBELL

To make independent living a reality we must bite the bullet and work with the government

Recent years have been tough for disabled people active in the UK's independent living movement.

Direct Payments – which enable disabled people to live, rather than merely exist – have not been sustained. Local authorities (LAs) have sought savings resulting in eligibility criteria being restricted, support packages being curtailed and service charges being increased.

At the same time, our centres for independent living have been destroyed by supermarket-type providers, which have used our language to market themselves as cheap alternatives to services provided by organisations controlled by disabled people.

LAs' desires to save money have been achieved by dropping the essential ingredients of peer support and training from independent living support programmes.

So is the independent living

movement doomed?

I don't think so. This year we have two opportunities to reclaim disabled people's rightful leadership of the independent living agenda.

First, Lord Ashley has introduced an Independent Living Bill in the House of Lords. This aims to give disabled people more choice

'Some people fear that engaging with the government puts our independence at risk'

and control over where and how they live. The right to live independently has been at the heart of the independent living movement since its inception.

Second, work is progressing on implementing the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report – *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* – which

included a chapter on independent living.

I will be chairing the independent living expert panel. It will draw on the expertise of disabled people to develop practical proposals to be fed into the government's 2007 comprehensive spending review. The aim is to make sure the government targets money towards making independent living a reality.

Some people fear that engaging with the government puts our independence at risk and we will find ourselves carrying out their proposals rather than ours.

Do we venture into unknown territory and risk having our agenda diluted or colonised? Or do we stay outside and risk being ignored?

After experiencing both approaches, I think it is better to be in the belly of the beast. The seas ahead may be stormy, but hopefully we have the wind behind us.

Jane is a commissioner for the Disability Rights Commission and an independent adviser on health and social care policy, disability rights and independent living

Burke's battle of the century

After a four-year struggle, Leslie Burke lost his legal fight to challenge General Medical Council guidance that allows doctors to remove artificial food and drink from patients. Susan Freeborn, one of his barristers, explains what the ruling means for Mr Burke and other disabled people

Leslie Burke has a form of the degenerative condition spino-cerebella ataxia. In time, he will lose the ability to swallow and will require artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH). What he most fears is being effectively starved to death, while unable to communicate his pain and wishes. He will remain fully aware of what is happening until almost the end of his life.

The General Medical Council's guidance permits a doctor to decide whether the life of a patient, who can no longer express their views, should be continued through ANH. Mr Burke successfully challenged this guidance in the High Court, but that decision was overturned by the Court of Appeal in 2005.

The House of Lords refused permission to appeal, so Richard Lissack QC and I pursued his challenge at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg.

Our arguments were based on Articles two, three, eight and 14 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 (ECPHR).

These arguments included:

Mr Burke's right to life; his right to be protected against inhuman or degrading treatment; his right to know that he will be provided with ANH until he dies; and the existence of a two-tier ANH system, where there is one law for those who can make their views known and another for those who cannot.

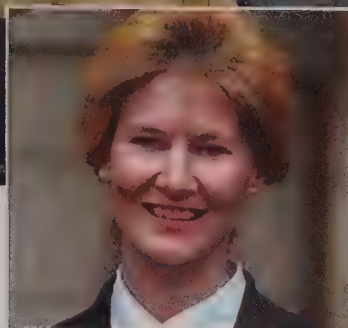
In August, the ECHR ruled that Mr Burke's application was inadmissible. There is no appeal against this decision.

The ECHR's written decision included confirmation that: a state must force hospitals to take appropriate measures to protect their patients' lives; a state must ensure individuals are not subjected to torture or inhuman and degrading treatment; and withdrawing ANH from a competent patient who wished for it to be continued would be murder.

But the ECHR also said that, if a doctor proposes to take such a controversial step, it is only recommended, not required, that he or she seek court approval – any more stringent duty would be "prescriptively burdensome". And it said UK law is sufficiently in favour of prolonging life where



Allies: Leslie Burke (above) and his lawyer Susan Freeborn (right)



possible, as any doctor would have to take account of the previously expressed wishes of a patient.

Finally, as neither an incompetent nor a competent patient can force a doctor to give treatment that is not needed clinically, the ECHR said there is no discrimination against a patient who loses competence.

The difficulty is that, while the court is saying withdrawing ANH from a competent patient

in future cases.

Mr Burke's advisers consider that asking for easier access to the courts was justified to provide peace of mind to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

The ECHR's ruling has not provided Mr Burke with the reassurance he needs, as he will not be at risk of ANH being withdrawn by a doctor until he loses the ability to communicate.

This case has highlighted the problems facing people with communication difficulties.

The Court of Appeal came close to saying that the application was premature and should not be made until Mr Burke was at risk of a doctor deciding against the continuation of his life. He would, of course, by then be unable to instruct lawyers or conduct litigation. This highlights the difficulty such disabled people face in protecting their human rights.

Mr Burke can make an advance directive in respect of his treatment. But, ultimately, there will come a time when a doctor will be acting under the guidance he sought to challenge. The outcome of the doctor's assessment cannot yet be known.



KEY NOTES ANDY RICKELL

Disabled families will also benefit from independent living

When Scope updated its mission statement two years ago, it introduced a phrase into the disability world that was much more radical than it sounded: "disabled families".

You may think it is a quick way of describing families which include disabled people. This is true on one level. But, Scope works to the social model of disability and in this context disabled means discriminated against on the grounds of impairment. So, the phrase "disabled families" covers family members who are discriminated against when associated with a disabled family member.

Many families face such discrimination. For example, if a disabled member cannot access a service, such as a transport or leisure facility,

nor can the rest of the family when they are together.

Discrimination in employment against disabled people can put a whole family in poverty.

Also, the state expects family members to be unpaid

'The level of discrimination faced by a disabled family is greater'

personal assistants, which can make poverty worse and limit opportunities for those members at school or at work.

We need to be honest here; the level of discrimination faced by disabled families is less than for the disabled person.

Non-disabled family members can reduce discrimination by doing things separately and do not suffer

personal discrimination. Also, society takes a positive attitude to a caring family, while having a negative attitude towards a disabled member.

Nevertheless, families of disabled people do benefit from improvements in disabled people's rights.

Therefore, disabled families have a vested interest in supporting the Independent Living Bill, as allies in support of disabled people and their organisations.

It also encourages the disabled people's movement to think about what independent living looks like for disabled children and their families, as well as disabled adults.

It is time for a broad alliance committed to the passing of the Independent Living Bill.

Andy is executive director for diversity, politics and planning at Scope

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Who else but Remploy?

After reading your article on Remploy (DN, September, page 14), I would like to make a few observations.

As the shop steward at the Remploy factory in Penzance, I feel I am qualified to comment on matters relating to this part of the world.

Phil Friend, chair of RADAR, said: "We are very keen to see an end to the sheltered workshop idea, which has been around for a long time and has generally served its purpose."

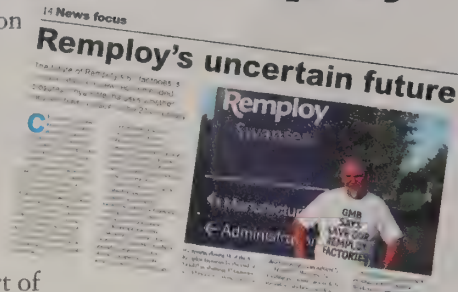
Could Mr Friend demonstrate where he would find an alternative, non-seasonal, meaningful and well-paid job in West Cornwall? I am confident the same question could be raised in other areas around the country.

Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission, said: "The context for the employment of disabled people has changed substantially in

recent years and our expectations are higher than ever before about what disabled people can achieve".

Our expectations are high – we don't want to be treated as second-class citizens. Remploy employees do a good job. We earn our wages and pay our taxes.

I have contacted Adult Social Care at Cornwall County Council, which can be relied upon to look after disabled people – as stated in the review from Price Waterhouse Coopers – and even they say they can't find us suitable alternatives to Remploy. Michael Rogers, Penzance



I was surprised by the letter *Shoppers Unite* (DN, August, page 20). The writer states that she found a previous article, *Knighted Tycoon Defends Stores* (DN Extra July, page 2) depressing: "For me it exemplified the way that so many disabled people respond to situations – by moaning."

Instead of complaining about access issues, she states that she simply takes her custom elsewhere. I find this extremely short-sighted and unhelpful in the long-term. If no-one complains, nothing will ever change.

I belong to the Plymouth Disability Action Network – a very active group involving both local authorities and voluntary agencies in successful efforts to positively challenge and change discrimination experienced by disabled people.

I do my best to campaign on an individual basis and have

had several successes.

I am responsible for: having an extra disabled parking bay provided at my local NHS podiatry clinic; beginning a support group for newly disabled people; the Plymouth Disability Information and Advice Centre has taken up my suggestion for an information pack for newly disabled people; our local hospital changed its policy to allow patients who do not have daywear to use its cafe in appropriate nightwear; and I am currently trying to convince the NHS to provide a dedicated counselling service for newly disabled people.

My complaining is not just for my benefit, it is for the benefit of the whole community.

If people disapprove of others complaining, they should not take advantage of the positive changes that such complaining brings about.

Mary Perry, Plymouth

There has been great progress in accessibility, especially since the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act. Now all we need is for people to stand up for themselves. You can take matters into your own hands and put them right.

I once came across a shop that had a sloping entrance, which was changed to a high step. So I sent a letter – also signed by a young mum and a pensioner – and the slope was reinstated with an apology.

On another occasion, I was trying to find the wide aisle in the supermarket. I asked the cashier: "Where's the access till?". She replied: "We don't accept access cards." Her face was a real picture when she looked up and saw my scooter.

I advise disabled people, who run into access issues, to keep their cool. A lot more can be achieved with cool, cold anger. Julia Lloyd, Hampshire.

Silent victims finally get a voice

I was pleased to read on your website that DN has picked up on the custodial sentences for care workers convicted of abuse at the Bedes View residential home in Hull (DN, June 2005).

I was a prosecution witness in this case and one of the things which kept me going was

the hope that lessons would be learned across the care sector. Perhaps now, following the fallout from the Budock inquiry (DN, August, page 15), this might happen.

My local mental health and learning disability NHS trust, has applied for foundation status and I have

applied to become a member so I can make a difference for patients with learning disabilities.

Name and address supplied.

● To learn more about institutional abuse, buy a copy of *Silent Victims*, £9.99; tel: 020 7619 7326 or visit: www.silentvictims.co.uk

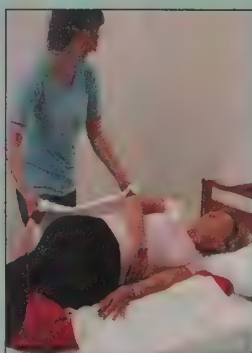
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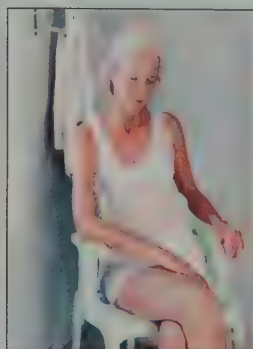
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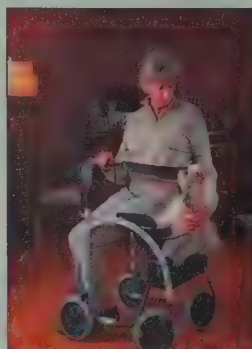
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Welfare Reform Bill must change to be successful

The Welfare Reform Bill should be amended significantly, if not scrapped entirely (DN, September, page 17).

It is a backdoor attempt to conceal spending cuts in the guise of "something good for sick and disabled people".

This new labour government could not care less about disabled people – they just want more voter support.

If this bill goes ahead, many vulnerable people will suffer because they will have their benefits cut or stopped and be forced into modern day work houses. Those with mental health difficulties will not be able to cope with this level of coercion.

The media are not reporting this side of the bill. They are focusing on getting people off benefits as if they are frauds.

Three times more fraud is committed for VAT than benefits and five times more for Income Tax.

The bill is widely proclaimed

– mostly by New Labour supporters – to be a good thing for sick and disabled people. This is incorrect.

The bill seeks to do three things: reassess those certified as unfit for work by their GPs and consultants and find them fit for work-related activities – which are as yet unspecified; find work for those assessed as fit. There's no work for non-disabled people, let alone disabled people; set up more private training companies, on top of the already rich companies set up to complete sub-contracts for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

The bill moves the power from DWP staff – who are being made redundant – to the private sector and has charities doing medical assessments, which should be done by medically qualified staff.

David Brown, by email

● For more on welfare reform, see this month's supplement, *Wise up to Work*.

web watch

All the latest from the Disability Now forums at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Blowing off steam

I have just been to do some food shopping. I cannot walk or stand for more than 10mins so am limited to what I can do. I went to the five items only till – there was no-one else waiting – it was obvious I was in distress and I use a stick, but I was told I could only have five items. I get so angry at the way I am treated sometimes.

Sally

I know how you feel. I have two braces on my legs after learning to walk again... well stagger really. You say it is obvious you were struggling, but perhaps not to the shop assistants. Why not use the wheelchairs many supermarkets have.

Robn

As a blind guide dog owner, I generally find supermarket staff are helpful. However, I remember one time when a security guard tried to get me to leave a store because of my guide dog. It was only due to the intervention of another member of staff that he realised assistance dogs are allowed in supermarkets. Obviously disability awareness training can help to avoid such misunderstandings but I wonder how many businesses pay for such training?

Drewdog

The sugar is on a pallet in my supermarket and I caught it when it was down to the last layer. I cannot bend down so I asked an assistant to get it for me. They wouldn't get it without hearing my medical diagnosis. I shouldn't have to do that, they wouldn't tell me they had piles would they?

Liz Williams

Tower block jitters

Can anyone tell me the advantages and disadvantages of living in high-rise council blocks, please? The reason I am asking is because a flat has just become available, on the homechoice list run by my local council. The problem is, the flat is in a high-rise block. I would not usually put in a bid, but this block is in a prime location overlooking a harbour, so I'm tempted.

Zulu

Unless it is a privately owned block with very strict landlords, I wouldn't touch it with a bargepole. I lived near council tower blocks for years and they are nothing but a hassle. Have you considered the impact of a broken lift? Councils sometimes take a week to mend them. We rent privately through a large corporation, but I have just found out they have places on the outskirts of London and as I really do not like living in the wilds of nowhere and am bored stiff with fields etc, I have finally convinced my other half that we should start making tracks back to the city (or near it).

Uncomfortable new sex life

My husband was in a car accident two years ago and sustained a brain injury. Before the accident we didn't really have a sex life and this was fine for both of us – we had a strong bond. However, since the accident, he has become more sexual and although I love him very much, I don't really enjoy this part of our relationship. He is far too aggressive. Any advice?

Norma

You should seek professional help and counselling. Brain injury is a complex area and can impact many things, including sexuality. It appears you have issues that are wider than just sex, and are best dealt with by different specialists, which would include sexual counselling. You should get a top psychologist in this area to help you address the issues you raise and those that are implied.

Ovid

backchat

● Few would deny that Ricky Gervais is funny, but he may have over-stepped the mark in the new series of his BBC2 show *Extras*.

When challenged over a joke in which a girl with cerebral palsy is mistaken for a drunk, he insisted his humour was "uncomfortable" but "challenging".

Backchat has to laugh. Gervais appeared on *The Daily Show* in the US moaning about how the British press had given him a complex about his weight.

It seems a tabloid printed a picture of him exercising and referred to him as a chubby funster. It's not much fun when the shoe is on the other foot, is it Ricky?

● The Tourette Syndrome (UK) Association will net at least £400,000 from telephone voting during this year's *Big Brother* (BB), thanks to winner Pete Bennett.

Backchat has to laugh (again). *DN* has spent weeks trying to convince the charity to discuss Pete's spell in the BB house. The words "blood" and "stone" were never far from our minds.

Have your say and join others chatting at www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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Man of the house

Pete Bennett, the first disabled person to appear on Channel 4's *Big Brother*, has not only won the competition, he has captured the hearts of a nation. He talks to Priya Kotecha about life in the media spotlight, his role as a posterboy for Tourette syndrome and his plans for the future

Four weeks after he swept to victory with 61.2 per cent of the final vote in the most talked about *Big Brother* (BB) series to date, life is moving at an incredible pace for Pete Bennett – the first disabled BB housemate.

The 24 year old, who has Tourette syndrome – a condition which, in his case, causes him to tic and swear involuntarily – has been swept up in a media frenzy, doing back-to-back interviews and photo shoots, spilling out the details of his life over and over again.

He says: "The interviews – I don't like them much – I think

'Lots of kids look up to me as a sort of idol. Cos I used to be bullied and so are they'

it's very nosy. I find it difficult to do that. It's quite hard, because being asked questions ticks me off. I do want to be kind of hidden away a little bit more."

Press attention aside, the "famous Touretter" is also coming to terms with his decision to quit Daddy Fantastic – a rock band he joined two years ago.

"It was a really, really horrible, hard decision I didn't want to do it really but I did it because, I suppose, I'm now able to do my own music."

The BB winner has already been contracted to co-write music with Guy Chambers (the former song-writing partner of Robbie Williams) and plans to release a single soon.

He says he can't wait to perform again and release all his "Tourette energy", as he calls it.

His antics on the podium on the final night of BB, as well as his now famous diary room disco – one of his favourite moments – were examples of that energy. Pete says that is a part of his condition and something he has never tried to hide.

"It's completely a part of me, I'm proud of having it [Tourette's], because I'm using it to be creative and funny and it gives me a certain quirkiness."

He says people with Tourette's are very "talented" and "creative" and must use this to their advantage.

"I know it comes with twitching, but it also comes with hidden talents and they have to nurture that."

He says he is happy that his appearance on the reality TV show has helped other people with Tourette's.

"I've helped people with Tourette's feel good about themselves.

I've helped lots of kids look up to me as a sort of idol for some

reason.

Cos I used to be bullied and so are they, but they sort of feel a bit stronger. It's mostly a Tourette's thing."

He says, as a child, that he looked up to Hollywood actor and comedian Jim Carrey to give him some "kind of hope".

"He kind of

inspired me to kind of be strong, cos I think he's a bit Tourettey. That's why I love him so much."

Pete has also now moved to London as he prepares for a

book tour.

The biography has already been written, although he admits he doesn't know what it will achieve.

He has also moved to London permanently from his hometown of Brighton and has no time to meet up with his friends. "I hardly see them. I'm gutted, I haven't got any time at all."

Once the media attention dies down, he also hopes to look into doing some stand-up comedy, something he was planning before he joined BB and for which he seems to have a natural talent.

"I'm looking into it. I'm figuring it out that you have to be yourself and people laugh at me anyway when I'm being myself," he says.

His ability to make others laugh was clear from the moment he stumbled down the BB staircase and shouted: "Honey, I'm home!" when the seventh series began way back in May.

His caring personality and genuine charm proved an instant hit, not only inside the house but outside, too.

He became the centre of attention, especially among the women in the house, something he couldn't quite understand.

'If you've got a disability, don't hide it, really be proud of who you are. And use your disability to your advantage'

"That's mad, isn't it? Fuck knows. I did notice that, of course. I was like, 'It's getting on my nerves.' I couldn't deal with all the attention."

In fact, he was fighting off romantic advances from the likes of Lisa, Lea, Aisleyne and

Nikki, until Nikki's persistence paid off and she finally won him over.

Pete says: "I like that she has lots of energy, a good character and she's sexy."

He says

would "become sane again".

"In the vision I had it said I would win, so I went for it, but in the house I did go through some doubts about my own sanity

Nikki had every right to be on the show, despite critics saying Channel 4 shouldn't have chosen her as a housemate because she had previously been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

"Part of her journey was to get out of a rut, and you know, it's like everyone was there for their own journey, and she deserved it, I think. She's really accomplished something."

It is clear that Pete identified with Nikki's insecurities.

"I'm really happy that she feels kind of good about herself now. I did like where she's come from. I related to that, yeah."

The couple remain together, although Pete shies away from revealing too much, simply saying "it's going well".

Pete's own BB journey started out from a vision in which he

again, thinking, 'fuck, maybe I'm just a crackpot, maybe I didn't really see it, maybe I was just schizophrenic,' but then it came true, so when I won I was like, 'fucking hell.' I was kicking myself for doubting myself, I should have just trusted what I saw. At the



Readers' thoughts on Pete

Julie Fernandez Disabled actress

I have mixed feelings when it comes to *Big Brother* (BB) and Pete Bennett. Part of me is glad that there is a person with a disability on TV – we all know how few of us are represented in the mainstream media.

In fact, a 2005 Ofcom report stated that less than one per cent of people/characters on TV have a disability.

From everything I read and hear in the news, Pete's BB appearance has been extremely beneficial to people with Tourette syndrome. It has raised the awareness to the point where children who had been picked on in school for years are now seen to be cool.

It goes to show how public attitude can change when disabled people are represented in the media. Let's face it, Channel 4 did not choose Pete for his charm – they chose him and his specific disability because of the entertainment value.

They appear to have a voyeuristic attitude towards disabled people.



And many people were worried Pete's disability would be exploited for TV.

Why could they not have chosen someone with a more physical disability?

That would be too complicated, they would have to change the physical structure of the house and seriously think about how they include someone with access needs into the incredibly stupid tasks that the housemates have to perform.

Despite my scepticism, Pete is a lovely guy and I wish him luck for the future. I also hope that his stint on BB can help the rest of us get more jobs in the media.

Ken Kay Photographer who has Tourette syndrome

When I heard that BB was including someone with Tourette's, I was overjoyed.

Any doubts as to whether Pete would fit in were dispelled early on. His personality and honesty about his disability won over his housemates and the voters' hearts instantly.

People are naturally curious about such a bizarre disability and Pete always talked frankly about his condition during the show. Thanks to Channel 4 these thoughts were shared with the nation. Who said education and entertainment can't go hand in hand?

There has been a lot of positive interest generated by his inspirational appearance and if it stops one child with Tourette's being picked on, or bullied by their peers, then his inclusion was worth it.

Pete nominated the Tourette Syndrome Association to receive over £400,000 from telephone voting on the show. It is a small, unsung charity, which helps desperate parents and children alike. This is a deserved fortune.



I would love to see more disabled people on TV, whatever their disability. Whether it's appearances on quiz shows, antiques shows, chat shows, or anything in between, we should let Britain know we are very capable, just differently abled.

Just by taking part, Pete has increased the visibility of disabled people in Britain. And we can all learn a lesson from his positive outlook. But perhaps the person who learned the most lessons from BB is Pete himself.

He learnt a few life lessons, had a relationship (or two), won £100,000 and boosted his chances of being a successful solo musician.

end, I was like 'wheyyy!! it all came true, heaven is real'."

It is clear the rollercoaster ride that is BB has rejuvenated him. He says he felt like his old self again the moment he entered the house.

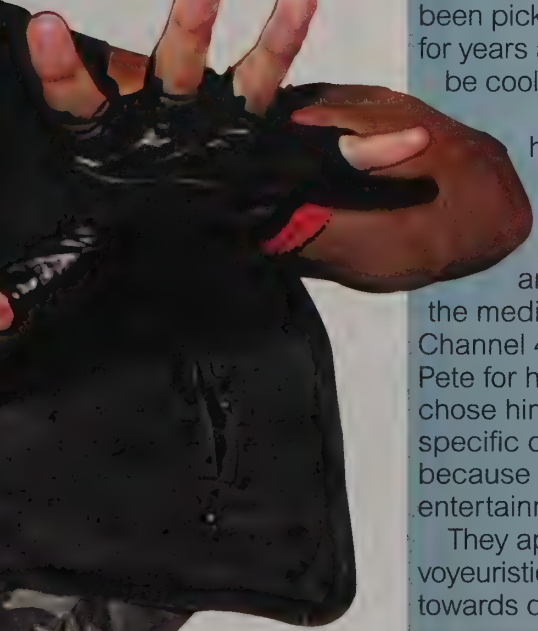
He says: "I feel kind of strong and confident again, I'm not scared anymore."

So how was life before BB?

"I was on the road to nowhere. I was kind of in a rut in my head, and things around me, I wasn't looking up. I was slightly tortured by things I was thinking, about where I was going and the way my mum was unhappy."

Pete also wanted to help his mum pay the mortgage by winning the £100,000 prize.

"I needed to help her out of her awful rut that she was in, working in McDonald's and having to be there all the time and not get any



money, got loads of mortgage to pay off, that was torture that was. I've sorted her out, that makes me feel happy."

Pete's happiness obviously lies in making others happy, and maybe that helps explain the frenzied media attention.

And he is keen for other disabled people to make it onto the show in years to come.

"Go for it, man. I mean, if you've got a disability, don't hide it, really be proud of who you are. And use your disability to your advantage. You can't take yourself too seriously."

This advice from a man who has single-handedly put Tourette's firmly in the media spotlight – and made the word "wanker" cool again.

Some people enter the BB house to win fame. Maybe the one contestant who never wanted it could become the most famous of them all.

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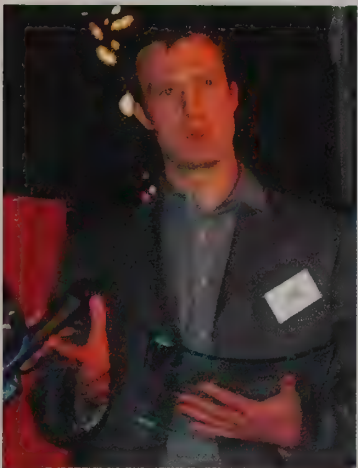




Best at their business

Ever fancied becoming an entrepreneur? Read on to get tips from those who are at the top of their field

JASON PEGLER



I am the CEO of Chipmunkapublishing and its charitable arm, the Chipmunka Foundation. In 1993, aged 17, I was diagnosed with manic depression. It was not until I began writing my autobiography in 1998, on living with manic depression, that I really began to get over it.

In August 2001, I received a National Lottery grant, so I could give copies of my book to people who needed help. Around the same time, I met a printer wanted to help and who encouraged me to set up a publishing company, to publish work written by people who had mental health issues.

So, in April 2002, I set up Chipmunkapublishing as a social enterprise, to help give a voice to people with mental illness. During the first two years, Chipmunkapublishing released 15 paperbacks. In March 2004, I received a grant from Unltd – a charity for social entrepreneurs – to expand Chipmunka. This gave me thinking time to set up the Chipmunka Foundation, which provides accessible information to people with mental health difficulties and also campaigns for their rights.

In January 2005, we started publishing ebooks (electronic books). This has been a real success as we have been able to help more people and it has given us the confidence to move in to other product lines, such

as music and art. Ebooks have real business advantages due to the quickness of product to market and low set-up costs. Electronic publishing and marketing also make it easier to attract more authors, supporters and people who will benefit.

In early 2005, I won the *New Statesman's* young social entrepreneur of the year award. There were more than 50 nominations and I was surprised to have beaten celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, who made the shortlist. This led to international press coverage in several countries.

That summer, Chipmunkapublishing was shortlisted as best online sales and marketing for Businesses in London, which again raised our profile.

'I was surprised to have beaten celebrity chef Jamie Oliver'

I would recommend self-employment and setting up a business to disabled people as much as I would to anyone else. Disabled people sometimes feel isolated and often feel, or are, discriminated against. Being your own boss means you can work for yourself, in your own time, and it is good for self-esteem.

In order to set up a social enterprise, business or charity, you need to have several qualities.

The most important thing is to have a real passion for what you are doing, believe that what you choose to do is important and that it will have a real impact on improving people's lives. If not, you will get bored and your project will suffer.

Great entrepreneurs are passionate, original, outstanding at promoting themselves and what they do, get the job done and raise their standards every day.

DAVID EDWARDS

My father once asked me where I get my drive and determination from – I honestly don't know.

I have become successful in the London insurance market, but did not leave school intending to take the City's Square Mile by storm. At 15, I sent off three speculative job applications and found myself working as a clerk for a marine insurance specialist. I spent my first week in front of a photocopier. To say it was boring is an understatement, but my dad told me to stick it out and he was right.

By 18, I had become a section leader. By 21, I was travelling to Scandinavia and getting involved in all aspects of the marine insurance business, not to mention holding down a second job in a pub, getting married and playing football in any spare time I had.

My success is based on hard work and an unfailing focus. Once I understood the business, I knew where I wanted to go and knew that I had to cram as much work into each day as was possible.

In 1989, a colleague and I started up our own business.



Success continued; I climbed the insurance career ladder and, in 1992, I sold the business to take up a new contract.

But, in 1993, I was involved in a car accident that made me reconsider every aspect of my life.

One morning, I was rushing to work with a big deal to complete, when I put my foot down, overtook a car, and found myself beneath a skip lorry. I had broken my neck, was airlifted to Stanmore (The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital) and have been a wheelchair user ever since.

Normally, patients with this type of injury remain in hospital for six months. I was released after just three; I needed to get home and I had a business to run."

But, despite my determination to continue succeeding, life had to change further. A year down the line, my then employer wanted to renegotiate my contract and cut my pay by half. I wasn't

going to agree to that.

So, I joined London Special Risks and I began buying shares. Now I own the whole company.

I might not be the most mobile person, but I don't let that stop me. Psychologically, there is a positive aspect to my disability – if a client makes arrangements to meet me, they are usually committed to doing business. They don't agree to meetings on a whim because they appreciate the effort I have to make.

I am also positive in my spare time, such as when I race cars. Whether its Porsches or Chevrolets, my play-to-win attitude ensures my disability never gets in the way.

For me, there's not a lot of difference between disabled and non-disabled people. If you are going to be successful you have to find something that interests you, you must sustain that interest and it must suit your personality. Only then will you excel.

HELP FOR BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS

ORGANISATIONS:

The Disabled Entrepreneurs Network – part of the Association of Disabled Professionals, the network provides a forum for the support of disabled business people. Tel: 0208 778 5008 or visit www.disabled-entrepreneurs.net

Ready to start – a joint project by Leonard Cheshire and Barclay's bank, providing mentors for disabled people wanting to start businesses. Tel: 020 7802 8200 or visit www.leonard-cheshire.org/readytostart

Independence – a business

network for disabled entrepreneurs, offering advice, workshops and online resources. Email: info@inde.org.uk

Enterprising Minds – an initiative designed to help people with mental health difficulties become self-employed. Tel: 0845 226 5516 or visit: www.enterprisingminds.org.uk

Unltd – provides social entrepreneurs with funding support packages. Tel: 0207 566 1139 or email: info@unltd.org.uk

Small Business Service – part of the Department for

Trade and Industry, the service aims to give more people the help they need to start businesses. Tel: 0207 215 5000 or visit: www.sbs.gov.uk

PUBLICATIONS:

The Entrepreneurs Book of Checklists: 1000 Tips to Help You Start and Grow Your Business, by Robert Ashton.

Start Your Business: Week by Week, by Steve Parks.

From Acorns...How to Build your Brilliant Business From Scratch, by Caspian Woods.

All publications are available from www.amazon.co.uk



Off benefits, into uncertainty

Concerns remain over government plans to push disabled people off incapacity benefit and into work. Campaigners are calling for problems to be addressed before the reform is rolled out. Elizabeth Choppin investigates

In the coming years, the government hopes to shift one million disabled people off Incapacity Benefit (IB) and into work.

Campaigners are demanding to know if disabled people – including those who cannot work, either on occasion or permanently – will be supported in the process and if employers will be ready to take those who can work.

Proposed legislation would funnel over one third of the UK's 2.7million IB claimants into the job market via schemes such as Pathways to Work for disabled people.

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has welcomed the principle of

improved work opportunities for disabled people in the Welfare Reform Bill – published in July – but says employers should be doing more to open up jobs for disabled people and that the government appears to have

'Successful reform will offer hope for many disabled people. But the government needs to raise its game'

offered no new initiatives to help the process.

Danny Alexander MP, Liberal Democrat disability spokesperson, agrees that welfare reform is "long overdue", but has criticised the

government's plan.

Mr Alexander says that the intended figure of £360m to roll out the Pathways to Work programme is "hundreds of millions short of what's needed". He adds: "Pathways-Lite will not do the job."

He argues that Pathways pilot programmes around the country have not worked for all groups – particularly people with mental health difficulties – and a better strategy is needed to help support new claimants.

He adds: "The government has said nothing about how employers are to be engaged in this process. We need better promotion of Access to Work to small businesses, support for businesses that take on former claimants and action to tackle workplace prejudice."

"Successful welfare reform will offer real hope of new opportunities for many disabled people. But the government needs to raise its game if those hopes are not to be disappointed."

Politicians and key disability figures have also said that the bill – with so many unanswered questions – is being rushed through parliament too quickly.

The Employers Forum on Disability – which has nearly 400 private and public sector members – warns that the welfare reforms will fail if it is not made easier for employers to take on more disabled people.

Forum chief executive Susan Scott-Parker says that, historically, the system has pushed disabled people into work, rather than helping employers "pull" them toward particular jobs.

The forum believes disabled job seekers are in danger of being "knocked out" of the race by barriers

such as employers' low expectations or their lack of disability expertise and inaccessible transport.

Ms Scott-Parker says: "The IB reforms ignore the fact that only employers have the jobs and ultimately the success of the reforms will depend on the extent to which employers say 'yes, I can and will employ this person'."

She adds: "How can one million people return to work if the employer is not factored into the plan? The government must understand that you can't get people into jobs unless the needs and expectations of employers are met."

Jeremy Hunt MP, Conservative shadow

'The compulsion elements of the bill will perhaps resonate more disturbingly'

minister for disabled people, says he is concerned that the bill fails to address the "root disincentives" to work that exist. A better "transitional system" is needed to help disabled people move from benefits into work," he adds.

"We also want to examine the significant role that part-time work, training, education and voluntary work can play as a first step back into employment."

So concerned are campaigners that in July, the work and pensions select committee launched an inquiry into how the government plans to meet its target of getting one million people back into work.

The committee's previous report, on the welfare reform green paper – which was published in April – had already demanded more detail, including plans for improved

training of employment advisors, significant funding for Pathways to Work, mechanisms to ensure employers could and would employ disabled people – including more support for those with mental health difficulties – and support for existing as well as new claimants, who will be the focus of the reforms.

According to DRC statistics, fewer than four out of ten employers would recruit someone who had been on benefits because of their mental health.

Sue Christoforou, policy officer for the mental health charity Mind, says while the charity supports the "underpinning principle", it feels – like others DN has spoken to – the "greatest oversight" is ignoring the part employers will have to play.

She also voices concern about "compulsion elements" of the proposals, which mean that claimants of the new benefit will be expected to take part in work-focused interviews before getting their full rate of benefit.

Many campaigners fear the system will leave disabled people at the mercy of assessments by benefits advisors and medical professionals who do not fully understand their needs, leading to some being forced into work, often prematurely.

Ms Christoforou says people with mental health conditions should not feel pressured into work before they are ready, as it could worsen their condition or prompt them to take inappropriate jobs.

"The compulsion elements in the bill will perhaps resonate more disturbingly with this group than any other group," she adds.

For those who are deemed fit for work, questions remain

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and how to support disabled members in the workplace.

TUDA co-chair Ju Gosling says the alliance is particularly concerned about the government's intention to withdraw Access to Work support from central government departments, which might have a "huge impact" on disabled people's ability to work.

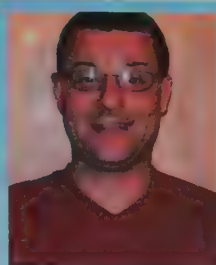
A DWP spokesman says the money will be used for businesses in the private sector and there are no plans to withdraw Access to Work from the wider public sector.

On general employment issues, a DWP spokeswoman says the government is putting together a "cohesive and wide-ranging action plan" – developed in consultation with employers and employer organisations – to increase the recruitment of disabled people.

Decisions are also still being made on levels of Employment and Support Allowance rates, which will replace IB and Jobseekers Allowance, but she insists that those who are not fit for work will be supported and that no current claimants will lose income.

Many questions, she suggests, will be answered through draft regulations, due out later this month.

Such a pledge has been made several times before; let's hope the government does not disappoint disabled people once again.



Name: Kevin Liddle, 41

From: South Shields

Impairment: Visually impaired

Employment History: Had been out of work for three years after his sight worsened and he left his job at a building society, where he had been for

13 years. After feeling in a "rut" last November, he visited his local Jobcentre Plus office – one of the Pathways to Work pilot sites. The only improvement he would make to Pathways is a more in-depth explanation of what the programme does in the initial letter sent out, which he found confusing.

Status: He now does administrative work at the Newcastle law firm Dickinson Dees after working with a Pathways advisor. He is provided specialist software and equipment through Access to Work funding, although he says his employer would have provided it.

He says: "I found it difficult to come to terms with being out of work. I've never been out of work since leaving school and I quickly lost my confidence and self-esteem. Taking that first step was the hardest, but [my advisor] was excellent."



Name: Mark Vero, 36

From: Leeds

Impairment: Mental health difficulties

Employment History: Has worked as a volunteer advisor for the Citizens Advice Bureau for the last five years but says he has felt stress, isolation and a

lack of support in the work place.

Status: He claims IB and is not keen to go through an employment scheme like Pathways to Work because he says experiences at the Jobcentre Plus have been negative. He says that staff members are "not very well trained" and that he assumes he will stay on benefit.

He says: "It would be a good idea to implement some discrimination and mental health awareness training in the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve knowledge and understanding of mental illness and to overcome fear and stigma."

on whether employers are open to making adjustments and rooting out discrimination against disabled people.

Nadine Geddes is carrying out extensive research on disability and employment at the University of Loughborough. It is funded by the European Social Fund and Jobcentre Plus.

She says many employers who have taken part in her study have misconceptions about the Disability Discrimination Act and what a reasonable adjustment is.

"They assume it is going to be something very big and expensive and that is very rarely the case," she says.

'Our biggest argument for this system is that it's difficult to train someone completely'

She says guidance is needed, which would help disabled people and employers with the transition from benefits to work.

For example, Ms Geddes is putting together a proposal for a database – for the Department for Work and Pensions – to which disabled people, employers, medical professionals, job advisors and government agencies could refer.

In-depth disability awareness training for job advisors and employers is also needed.

She adds: "Our biggest argument for this system is

that it's difficult to train someone completely, because there is so much information out there. One person cannot be expected to know everything."

Ahead of the government changes, the Trade Union Disability Alliance (TUDA) has launched a charter that aims to make trade unions more aware of their obligations under the DDA

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Newspapers no better

DN's latest Hacked Off survey reveals newspapers' widespread failure to recruit disabled journalists, which will do little improve society's understanding of disability. Elizabeth Choppin reports

DN CAMPAIGN

It is two years on from DN's first survey of national newspapers' attitudes toward employing disabled journalists — carried out as part of our Hacked Off campaign to encourage responsible reporting on disability.

In 2004, DN received only five responses on employment and training policies out of the nine newspaper groups contacted.

Those results were dismal; only one group — Guardian Newspapers (GN) — knew the number of disabled people it employed. It was also the only group to sign up to DN's Hacked Off pledge to employ more disabled journalists and improve language use. Attention to access and disability awareness was also lacking among the others' responses.

The 2006 results are just as bleak. DN's latest research — which also includes responses from key regional titles — shows disability is still disregarded by print media. Just three out of nine national newspaper groups — and three out of seven regional newspapers — have bothered to respond to the

survey, despite being given several weeks to do so.

The Independent/Independent on Sunday group has declined to respond, despite saying it was "considering" signing up to the DN pledge in 2004.

A spokeswoman says: "We don't want to take part this year. Could you come back to us next year?"

A spokeswoman for *The Sun*, *News of the World*, *Times* and *Sunday Times* says: "We don't respond to external questionnaires of this kind."

Representatives of other newspapers say they "don't have time", "don't keep a record of those figures" or are "too busy".

'We don't want to take part this year. Could you come back to us next year?'

Just two national newspaper groups can confirm they have any disabled journalists — a slight improvement from 2004 when only one kept track of such figures.

Of the two regional newspapers which have responded, neither can say

whether disabled journalists are on staff.

Only two newspaper groups — *the Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph* and the *Western Mail* (WM), based in Wales — signed up to the DN pledge, bringing the total number of pledges to three.

But without monitoring numbers of disabled editorial staff, how can the WM hope to fulfil the pledge?

Jenny Barnes, the paper's human resources officer, says the paper is aware of the problem and that it is "something we're looking into". She adds: "I can't say we're going to start monitoring right away but [the issue] has been raised. We're very aware that we need to do something about it."

Guardian Newspapers has renewed its pledge — first made in 2004 — but with the percentage of disabled editorial staff dropping from 2.2 to 1.2, how has it helped?

Emma Kiwanuka, GN equality and diversity manager, says she believes numbers have dropped due to people leaving or retiring, or new staff not reporting a disability. Ms Kiwanuka says: "Because the pool [of disabled journalists] is very small, it could literally be

that a few people left and made the difference."

She admits that GN does not have diversity targets, but points out that it is trying to increase the number of applications from disabled people with pro-active advertising, working with the Employers Forum on Disability (of which it and the *Financial Times* are members) and interviewing any disabled applicants who meet minimum requirements.

Naomi Lever, GN head of human resources, recognises the decrease in disabled staff members but says the first Hacked Off survey has led to improved access for people with sensory impairments, including large-text signage and audio announcements in lifts.

Similarly, Ms Barnes says the WM has supported a hearing-impaired journalist by arranging for a modified telephone system through Access to Work.

Other newspapers appear to have little clue about how they can support disabled employees.

Helen Smith, of the human resources department of the Trinity Mirror Group — which declined to take part in the survey — says: "We don't know what [sites] are accessible because we're so multi-sited."

She adds that the company does not use the two ticks symbol for job adverts — which recognises commitment to the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled people — because each department does its own recruiting. "We

have nothing to do with it," she says.

When pressed about whether newspapers should implement and enforce such diversity recruitment policies, Ms Smith replies: "Well, that's your opinion. We can't help you."

The 2006 results also show that only GN and *Manchester Evening News* use the two ticks symbol when recruiting for journalism roles.

Jeremy How, a personnel executive for Associated News — which owns the *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Evening Standard* — says the two ticks symbol is not used because managers recruit "autonomously".

'We don't know what [sites] are accessible because we're so multi-sited'

Mr How said: "In an organisation of this size, it's hard to push policies because then we'd have to police them. That's not to say it's not something that we won't do in the future."

John Slade, employment officer for the RNIB, says: "The survey results are grim and require employers to do much more in terms of employing disabled people. One way they could do this would be to engage further with voluntary sector organisations."

The RNIB and partners in eight other European countries have launched a project aimed at increasing the number of disabled people in the media and improve the way they are portrayed.

The project — funded by the

DN's pledge:

We agree:

- to work, in our employment policies, towards representing the 15 per cent of economically active people (those working or available for work) who are disabled.
- to cover reporting of disability issues in training courses.



Hacked Off Herald

October 2006

Guardian signs up again

News of the World, *Times* and *Sunday Times* says: "We don't respond to external questionnaires of this kind."

Representatives of other newspapers say they "don't have time", "don't keep a record of those figures" or are "too busy".

Just two national newspaper groups can confirm they have any disabled journalists — a slight improvement from 2004 when only one kept track of such figures.

Of the two regional newspapers which have responded, neither can say whether disabled journalists

Only two newspaper groups — *the Telegraph/Sunday Telegraph* and the *Western Mail* (WM), based in Wales — signed up to the DN pledge, bringing the total number of pledges to three.

But without monitoring numbers of disabled editorial staff, how can the WM hope to fulfil the pledge?

Jenny Barnes, the paper's human resources officer, says the paper is aware of the problem and that it is "something we're looking into". She adds: "I can't

something about it."

Guardian Newspapers has renewed its pledge — first made in 2004 — but with the percentage of disabled editorial staff dropping from 2.2 to 1.2 per cent, how has it helped?

Emma Kiwanuka, GN equality and diversity manager, says she believes numbers have dropped due to people leaving or retiring, or new staff not reporting a disability. Ms Kiwanuka says: "Because the pool [of disabled journalists] is very small, it could literally be that a few people left and made the difference."

She admits that GN does not have diversity targets, but points out that it is trying to increase the number of applications from disabled people with pro-active advertising, working with the Employers Forum on Disability (of which it and the *Financial Times* are members) and interviewing any disabled applicants who meet minimum requirements.

Naomi Lever, GN head of human resources, recognises the decrease in disabled staff members but says the first Hacked Off survey has led to

and audio announcements in lifts. Similarly, Ms Barnes says the WM has supported a hearing impaired journalist by arranging for a modified telephone system through Access to Work.

Other newspapers have little clue about how they can support disabled employees.

Helen Smith, of the human resources department of the Trinity Mirror Group — which declined to take part in the survey —

Telegraph signs pledge

says: "We don't know what [sites] are accessible because we're so multi-sited." She adds that the company does not use the two ticks symbol for job adverts — which recognises commitment to the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled people — because each department does its own recruiting. "We

career development of disabled people — because each department does its own recruiting. "We have nothing to do with it," she says.

When pressed about whether newspapers should implement and enforce such diversity recruitment policies, Ms Smith replies: "Well, that's your opinion. We can't help you."

The 2006 results also show that only GN and *Manchester Evening News* use the two ticks symbol when recruiting for journalism roles.

Jeremy How, a personnel executive for Associated News — which owns the *Daily Mail*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Evening Standard* —

Four papers employ disabled journalists

THE BRIDGE ON THE M4



Newspapers	Number of editorial staff	Percentage disabled	Is your newsroom accessible? If so, how?	Are staff trained in reporting disability?	Do you use two ticks?	Will you sign DN's pledge?
The Guardian, The Observer	Would prefer not to disclose this figure	1.2%	Not fully, but have made several adaptations in last two years	Guardian style guide contains guidelines on reporting disability issues. Diversity awareness workshops available for all staff	Yes	Yes renewed
	394 and 142 respectively	2.2%	Access – tested for people with mobility problems but not sensory impairment	Guardian style guide contains guidelines on reporting disability issues. Diversity awareness workshops available for all staff	Guardian media group does, but looking into it for editorial job ads	Yes
Daily Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph	Approximately 500	3 people	Yes, for mobility problems	No	No	Yes
	600	Unknown	Yes – taken into account when new building designed. Disabled loos, wheelchairs available, fire procedures	Not highlighted at training courses	Considering it at the moment	Considering it
Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday	Do not record this data	Do not record this data	Yes	General diversity briefings for managers and publish diversity materials for staff	Not consistently	No
	No answer	Not on record	Accessible via lift and small ramp from street. Work station assessments by occupational health specialist	Staff complete training long before they arrive	Do not normally advertise. There are plenty of people known to us that we can recruit	No
Independent, Independent on Sunday	No response					
	"We do not divulge headcounts"	Unknown	Yes	Training would take place if need was identified	No	Possibly
Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror	No response					
	No answer	Unknown	Lifts, disabled loos, special security gate for wheelchairs	We presume they learn this on their course	No	No
Western Mail	224	Do not record this data	Yes	Not specially, but they do receive training on the press code of conduct	No, but use an equal opportunities statement in adverts	Yes
Manchester Evening News	61	Not known	Yes. New office is DDA compliant	Incorporated in training on diversity for all staff	Yes	Unable to say at this time
The Herald (Glasgow)	Unable to supply information	Unable to supply information	Editorial floors are accessible for people with mobility problems	No Answer		

• Refused to take part: Independent, Independent on Sunday, Sun, News of the World, Times, Sunday Times, Sport, Sunday Sport, Daily Star, Sunday Star, Express, Sunday Express, Yorkshire Evening News, Liverpool Echo and Birmingham Evening Mail. Failed to respond: Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, Financial Times and Bristol Evening Post.

European Commission – will organise vocational days so potential disabled journalists and employers can network.

Mr Slade says: "That's one of the best ways to do awareness raising – to get future talent in the room with employers."

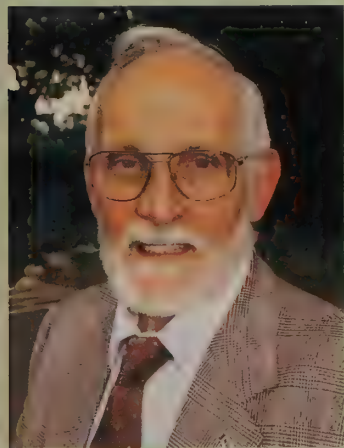
He adds that "massive under-representation" of

disabled people is not unique to the media, but that the media is in a position to be a catalyst for a change.

Stephen Brookes, chair of the Disabled Members Council of the National Union of Journalists, says the survey results show "sad truth" and urges media organisations to re-evaluate

their equality policies.

Mr Brookes adds: "What has to be of added concern to the results is that so few of the major papers had any knowledge of numbers of disabled staff members and this is actually just about failing to comply with the most basic disability employment equality law."



Roger Jones, 58, of Bedworth in Warwickshire, was born with a mobility impairment and has worked as a reporter on regional newspapers for over 40 years.

He worked as chief reporter on the Solihull Times – part of the Trinity Mirror group – for approximately three years when he was let go in November of 2002.

He had been off work for ten months due to a blood clot in his lung and was told that a company doctor said he was incapable of doing his job.

He returned to work in March 2003 after receiving help from the National Union of Journalists and said his editor was very supportive throughout the process by allowing him flexible working hours and the option to work from home.

Mr Jones says: "It's good to be have been able to prove I am

still more than capable of holding my own."

He adds: "Many disabled people are born battlers, don't give in easily – and work as hard as they are able. If the youth employment officer at secondary school had had his way, I could well have missed out on an extremely fulfilling – although not well paid – 42 years in journalism."

He is now off work due to a shoulder injury and is unsure when he may be able to return to work.

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Hitting the job trail



Finding employment can be a daunting experience but Priya Kotecha makes the job hunt a bit easier with tips on where to look, writing CVs, preparing for interviews and the training and financial schemes available

Finding work

Whether you are fresh out of school or university, considering employment for the first time or returning to work, the internet is ideal for job hunting.

Use the internet to research your chosen field or interests, including possible training.

Consider the personal, social and financial aspects of all options. If are interested in a certain career, get advice from people working in the field as well as friends and family, before making any decisions.

You should also research specialist organisations in your chosen field and look at any relevant trade publications and newspaper job sections.

If such information is not available online, most major libraries stock the main titles.

Look out for recruitment fairs, open days and careers events, which can put you in touch with relevant organisations and employers.

Wherever you search, do not forget to post your CV on any relevant websites.

Using the internet, you should also be able to find details of your local Jobcentre Plus offices and local recruitment agencies, with which you can register.

Work and training schemes

There are several employment and training schemes and job agencies aimed at disabled people. Some are listed here, but you will find more online.

Government schemes:

- **Work Preparation** – Tailored programmes that help identify work opportunities suited to you and includes work experience placements.
- **New Deal for Disabled People** – The scheme puts you in touch with job brokers who work with you to develop an action plan and give advice on job applications.
- **Workstep** – Provides support for disabled people facing barriers to getting and keeping a job. It also offers practical assistance to employers.
- **Pathways to Work** – A pilot scheme aimed at getting people off Incapacity Benefit and into work through holistic support. It is currently offered in 21 regions, but will be rolled out nationally by 2008. If you have profound or multiple disabilities, or have been out of work for sometime, you can volunteer for the programme. For more information, visit: www.direct.gov.uk or www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk. For **New Deal**, tel: 0845 606 2626.

Contacts:

- **Employment Opportunities** – Helps disabled people find jobs, tel: 020 7448 5420 or visit: www.opportunities.org.uk
- **Remploy** – Helps to develop jobseekers' skills and provide training and recruitment programmes, tel: 0800 138 7656 or visit: www.remploy.co.uk
- **Shaw Trust** – Provides training and work opportunities for disabled and

disadvantaged people, tel: 01225 716 300 or visit: www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Training

If your dream job requires extra qualifications or training, you will have to think about ways to fit that in within your existing circumstances.

For first time jobbers or those re-entering employment, retraining is key to making you suitable for re-employment. Your local Jobcentre Plus office will point you in the direction of organisations which can help.

Volunteering is a good way to brush up on those vital skills and the good thing is, you can do it at your own pace.

If you are fresh out of university, and need extra training, the ideal situation might be to secure a job through graduate training schemes, which are offered by certain employers. They offer work and training in one neat package and the best part is the training is paid for by the employer.

Remember, these opportunities are highly sought after and need to be researched in advance, ideally a year before you will start work. But if you miss out on this, fear not, there are alternatives. You can combine work and training by securing a part-time job and enrolling in a part-time course simultaneously. This will give you some flexibility because you are working to your own goals rather than those set by your

employer. The downside is some courses can be very expensive and outweigh any long-term financial benefits – even if it leads to a job.

If money is not an issue, it is worth enrolling for unpaid work placements with potential future employers.

Contacts:

- **Lifelong Learning** – Work placements for disabled people, visit: www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/placements
- **Ucandoit** – Home-based computer training for disabled people, visit: www.ucandoit.org.uk
- **The Prince's Trust** – Helps disadvantaged groups find jobs, tel: 020 7543 1234 or visit: www.princes-trust.org.uk
- **Rathbone Training** – Provides learning opportunities for young people tel: 0800 917 6790 or visit: www.rathboneuk.org
- **Skill** – National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, tel: 0800 328 5050 or visit: www.skill.org.uk

Guide:

- **Moving to Work** – Provides information on benefits and other help available to disabled people considering work. For a copy, tel: 020 7247 8776 or visit: www.disabilityalliance.org/public.htm
- **For volunteering opportunities:**
- **Community Service Volunteers** – Volunteering and training organisation, tel: 020 7643 1427 or visit: www.csv.org.uk

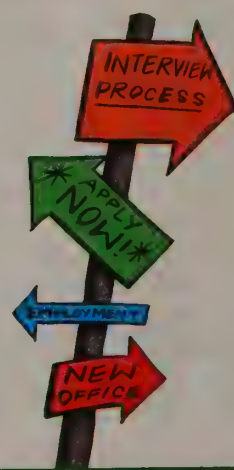
Financial help

Job Grant – This is a tax-free payment for a disabled person who starts a full-time job and stops getting benefits. To be eligible you should be claiming certain benefits for at least 26 weeks.

Job Introduction Scheme – This offers financial incentives to employers to recruit disabled people and helps to pay your wages and other employment costs. To qualify the job must be for at least 26 weeks and you must apply before you start the job.

Access to Work – The scheme is designed offers solutions to access issues and offers financial support to help you work effectively, whether you need communication support, equipment or support with travel costs.

For more information on these schemes, visit: www.direct.gov.uk or www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk



CV preparation

When you start looking for a job, you need a CV.

Your CV must grab an employer's attention and prove you are right for the job.

As well as having a general CV, you should alter it slightly for specific job applications.

Your CV must:

- Be clear and concise;
- Cover the areas laid out in the job specification;
- Demonstrate how the skills you have gained can help you do the job;

• Highlight crucial elements of your personality, such as being patient or organised.

Your CV must not:

- Have spelling errors;
- Be repetitive;
- Be more than two A4 sides;
- List things irrelevant to the position – although some employers may be interested in other skills, experiences and hobbies you have;
- Be handwritten, unless requested by the employer.

Cover letter

A CV is not complete without a

cover letter. It is the first thing an employer sees, so make it formal, use the correct titles, sign it and make an impression.

A covering letter provides a brief summary of you, states how you are right for the job and your strengths that fulfil requirements of the position.

Online resources:

- www.support4learning.org.uk
- www.cv-library.co.uk
- www.alec.co.uk/cvtips/
- www.prospects.ac.uk/links/coverlet
- www.jobsite.co.uk

To declare or not to declare?

Disabled people often face a dilemma when deciding whether to tell an employer about their impairment. Stephen Parr, a disability employment consultant, gives the following advice.

"If you require support from your employer and you know your impairment may impact your ability to do a job, then tell your employer early on.

For employers to have any chance of working through their issues and assumptions about disability they need to ask questions.

CVs offer an ideal opportunity to demonstrate how disability can be a positive influence on life.

Application forms often

ask about disability to give people a chance to explain what is the nature of their impairment.

By declaring, you can demonstrate that you have additional skills that have developed around a particular impairment.

If you get to the interview stage, your employer should feel comfortable asking questions. If they feel unable to ask questions that concern them, they won't offer you the job.

Fear of disability comes from a lack of knowledge. Disabled people applying for work have a responsibility to impart knowledge to others that increases the opportunities for success. In my experience, the best way to do this is to let an employer know."

Interview process

If you've bagged an interview, it means an employer is interested in what you have to offer and wants to know more.

You must find out as much as possible beforehand, including the location, time, place, date and whether it is accessible – if not let the employer know in advance what your special needs are.

Also find out if there will be a test before or after the interview, the nature of the test and how long it will last.

Do your research and try to find out as much about the company as possible, including their various departments, competitors, what they are trying to achieve through the new appointment

and a bit about their history.

Get there early and compose yourself before you enter the building. Be friendly to all staff and visit the loo if necessary. If your access requirements have not been met, make your disappointment known in a calm manner.

During the interview:

- Make regular eye contact and smile when you can.
- Don't interrupt.
- Answer appropriately and with enthusiasm, take your time, but don't go off tangent.
- Be honest about your impairment, but only offer information asked for. Present alternative solutions if doubt is raised over your ability.

For more advice visit:

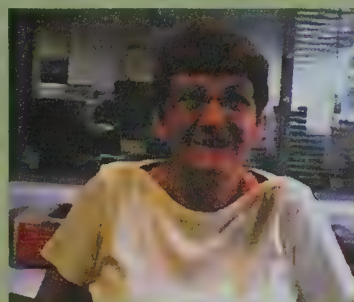
- www.agencycentral.co.uk
- www.aimhigher.ac.uk
- www.interview-skills.co.uk



How I found work

I had severe depression for 20 years, leaving me with low self-esteem. After losing my parents and getting divorced within two years, I had to give up work due to osteoarthritis.

When I decided to return to work, I spoke with a disability employment adviser (DEA) at my local job centre and enrolled on a course in business administration.



After completing this, my DEA gave me a list of job brokers. I got in touch with Employment Opportunities in Newcastle.

I had a low opinion of myself, but the staff worked with me to build my

confidence and develop skills.

I found that my age, 54, was a barrier in finding work, but my determination paid off.

At interviews, I stressed that I had life skills, which were important to employers.

I attended an Employment Opportunities job ready course, and they helped me to design a new CV.

With their help, I found employment as an administrator with Newcastle Society for Blind People.

Irene Rose

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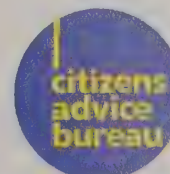
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Where have all the graduates gone?

Disabled graduates are catching up with their non-disabled counterparts in getting jobs, but there are still impairment groups and industry sectors which require attention. Jessica Sutton reports

Whatever the industry, or background of employees, you can almost guarantee that proportionately fewer disabled people will be in work.

But does having a degree close the gap? The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) has attempted to find out*.

Using data on the 13,000 disabled people who graduated in 2004, the organisation looked at their progression within six months of them finishing their first degrees.

Elsbeth Farrar, AGCAS, says: "There has been a lot of press coverage about poor employment rates, so we wanted to see if having a degree made a difference."

When considering the whole UK population, latest figures from the Department for Work and Pensions show that 47 per cent of disabled people of working age are employed compared with 74 per cent of non-disabled people.

Disabled graduates are also more likely to be unemployed than non-disabled graduates, but the AGCAS survey shows that gaining a degree closes the gap considerably, with just a

4.8 per cent difference. Of the 2004 graduates, 57.4 per cent of disabled people gained employment compared with 62.2 per cent of the general graduate population.

Disabled graduates are also less likely to be in full-time work – 48.9 per cent compared with 54.9 per cent – and more likely to be in voluntary work, although just 1.2 per cent compared with 0.9 per cent.

'Wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties are the least likely to be employed'

Others embarked on further study, were unavailable for work, or were still unemployed after six months – nine per cent of disabled people compared with 6.3 per cent non-disabled.

While most gaps are fairly narrow, when researchers looked at employment outcomes of people with specific impairments, it seems differences in opportunities for different groups are greater.

Those with dyslexia, hearing impairments or hidden impairments are most likely to be equal to, or do better

than, non-disabled graduates in getting jobs.

However, wheelchair users and those with mobility difficulties are the least likely to be employed – just 32.4 per cent are in full-time work compared with 48.9 per cent of all disabled graduates and 54.9 per cent of non-disabled graduates. Mr Farrar says this is often because employers are "over cautious" about people with such physical impairments.

Unexpectedly, figures suggest a significant rise in full-time employment for those with mental health difficulties, up to 42.9 per cent, compared with AGCAS's 2003 figures of 29.5 per cent.

Alison Cobb, policy officer at mental health charity Mind, says such levels of employment are not usually found.

She says: "Employers tend to be much less aware of mental health problems than of physical health problems and particularly reluctant to offer jobs to those who have disclosed a history of mental health problems."

"It would be encouraging to think that this signifies a real change in mental health awareness and recruitment



Getting there: disabled graduates are gradually succeeding

practices, but we can't yet be sure that is the case. This research is very worthwhile and we certainly look forward to seeing next year's statistics to see if there is a positive trend here."

The report also indicates that disabled people are going into many different sectors, contrary to anecdotes that employers think disabled people do not fit into certain fields.

However, as might be expected, there are lower levels of disabled people working in the financial sector – 5.6 per cent compared with 7.6 per cent of non-disabled people.

'There are lower levels of disabled people working in the financial sector'

Also, there are higher levels of disabled people working in "other community, social and personal service activities" – 11.2 per cent compared with 7.5 per cent. In social work specifically, numbers are closer – 15.6 per cent of disabled graduates compared with 16.8 per cent who are non-disabled.

Alex Kemp, disabled students' officer for the National Union of Students, says: "Often disabled people are forced into what are perceived to be accessible careers such as social work. There is a high proportion of disabled people in these industries compared to more traditional graduate careers such as finance."

He adds: "We should be looking further at extra effort disabled people have to go through to get a job or the glass ceiling that is in place once a disabled person is in employment."

To gain the right job, prove they can enter a certain profession and climb the career ladder, disabled graduates might consider trying work schemes aimed at them.

One is Scope's Leadership Recruitment scheme, which puts graduates into paid-for work placements; it has arranged placements for more than 130 graduates since the programme began in 1992.

The charity is expanding the

initiative, by arranging posts reserved for disabled graduates within established graduate schemes. Already, Capital One, Lehman Brothers and KPMG plan to take advantage – changing the fact that the financial sector has traditionally had low numbers of disabled employees.

Barry Hayward, Scope's leadership recruitment manager, says: "Instead of a disabled candidate trying to get onto a graduate scheme in September and then coming to us later if they don't, we now will be saying to students to apply to us at the same time as other employers. If they get to the next stage with the graduate employer, we will offer that employer advice on making the recruitment process accessible, thereby increasing the likelihood of success."

Tom Eats, who has cerebella ataxia, benefited from the original scheme. He obtained a degree in geography at Sussex University and after a six-month placement with the exam board Edexcel, he secured a full-time job as an international market analyst.

"I sent out a few applications to graduate schemes during my final year. I got a place on the Scope scheme in the summer of my graduation, so I didn't need to send off a barrage of CVs."

Mr Eats found confidence to be a major factor when applying for jobs. He says: "The combination of a lack of previous experience and relative social isolation made me much less sure of myself."

He also found it best to declare his disability to prospective employers and access was said that was still a major barrier to gaining employment. He says: "The working environment is catching up, but there's a fair way to go."

** What Happens Next: A Report on the First Destinations of 2004 Graduates with Disabilities; for a copy, tel: 0114 251 5750 or visit: www.agcas.org.uk*

*** For more information on Leadership Recruitment, email: barry.hayward@scope.org.uk or tel: 020 7619 7277*



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London's Liberty Festival

There was a lot of talent at this year's Liberty Festival, but Ivy Broadhead was not won over by everything

This year, I finally made it to London's annual Liberty Festival – the 4th so far – which took place on Saturday 2 September. Set against the majestic statue of Alison Lapper gracing Trafalgar square – a symbol of the beauty and strength of



disabled people – I'm sorry to say that certain aspects of Liberty were a disappointment.

I was reminded of something Mat Fraser, a past compere, said at the very first festival: "The importance of this event is that for the thousands of people watching, they are seeing disabled people as competent, professional performers."

Liberty should be about celebrating high-quality art by disabled artists and performers. It should draw in people who stumble across Trafalgar Square, but if I had wandered in accidentally that day, I doubt I would have been inspired to stay.

The overly aggressive (and oddly space-themed) rants of Dead Beat International and You were not quite suitable for a family audience.

The mime of Ramesh Meyyappan could have been amusing, but after two overly long performances, he had lost his audience.

Although instrumental in the early years of the disability movement, the protest songs of Johnny Crescendo and Andy Morgan seemed tired and dated, at odds with the



supposedly progressive ethos of the festival (think, *Piss on pity, We're not dead yet* and chaining yourself to railings and you get the idea).

One spectator said: "The acts did not always seem to portray the positive image of disability that Liberty talks about."

Unlike previous years, there was a host of comperes at the event, many of whom lacked the necessary charisma. Arguably, the advantage of having a single compere is that it provides some continuity in the wildly varying line-up – both in terms of format and quality of the performances.

That is not to say that there weren't fantastic examples of disability art on offer – the uplifting *Elevation*, a specially-commissioned dance piece by Caroline Bowditch, was one of the exceptions.

Ms Bowditch said that her work was inspired by "the

need for disabled people to be politically elevated".

The dancers – moving through the audience and around the square – vied with live-mixed music and video footage for the attention of the audience, the intention being that "everyone will have a different view and a different experience of elevation".

Another highlight was *Miniatora*, a new work by internationally renowned dance company CandoCo, which again abandoned the stage for a less conventional setting – in this case a gigantic orange inflatable set.

With slow, electro accompaniment and insectile costumes, designed by the memorably-named Ursula Bombshell, the dancers used "sinuous, elegant movement which explores the body as an architectural form".

Previous Liberty success, Caroline Parker, returned with a signed-singing drag routine.

Priscilla Queen of the Deaf World – part homage to the cult film *Priscilla Queen of the*

Desert and part celebration of deaf culture – certainly brightened up the afternoon.

The brilliantly extravagant finale, with its explosions of glitter and huge butterfly wings, emblazoned with the lyrics to "I Am What I Am", would have made an ideal climax to the festival itself.

Inexplicably, the programmers decided to let the day trundle on with some less than inspirational music from The Heroes.

In his speech at the festival, mayor Ken Livingstone spoke of plans to link the Liberty festival with the 2012

Paralympics and the need for London to become "a world leader in accessibility".

He admitted that there was room for improvement in the festival, to give it "a much more participatory and democratic feel, with more involvement of disabled people". If that means a more exciting programme that disabled and non-disabled people can feel proud to be part of, I'm all for it.

Pictures by Steven Ball



Spotlight on Priya...

Priya is a delightful little 6 month-old Asian baby girl with a charming smile

Baby Priya has Down Syndrome and her parents are unable to care for her. She was discharged from the hospital after her birth, she is now in foster care where she is thriving. Priya is currently meeting her physical milestones and her medical treatment is being appropriately monitored.

Priya likes playing on a mat by herself and can turn over. She has a good body balance and can support her neck and shoulders well when held. Priya is very responsive and smiles and laughs when people 'talk' to her.

Priya eats well and sleeps well. Her favourite food is porridge, which she has for breakfast, and chicken and vegetable baby food for lunch/dinner. She also loves mashed fresh fruit especially pears and apples.

Priya's Carer says it's a joy caring for Priya who is becoming more and more active and alert over the weeks. Priya recognises her Carer and looks for her attention in a group of unfamiliar people. She is very well bonded with her Carer and their family. Priya needs a stimulating environment and an adoptive family who has a strong commitment to make life better and enjoyable for her. She needs warm and compassionate parents who can promote her cultural identity.

Professional support from the Medical and Health agencies will be offered to the adopters.

If you could provide a loving home or would like more information on Priya, please contact Sonali Karve directly on



be a family
Adoption Fostering Family Link

*Child's name has been changed for legal reasons

Ealing
www.ealing.gov.uk

Exhibitions

Sense & Sensuality brings together around 70 works of art, all designed to be handled. The exhibition is the brainchild of the charity BlindArt and includes paintings, sculptures and sound installations produced by visually impaired and sighted artists.

It's great; you don't need to be visually impaired to appreciate the works of art created from tea leaves, twisted steel, liquorice and squidgy cuddly toys, which share space with objects made from wood, glass and clay. I am unable to appreciate light or colours, but I heard lots of other people in the Bankside Gallery gushing over the range of colours on show – pale blues, dark greys and lurid greens.

There was no audio guide available when I visited, which was a shame, I would have liked somebody to talk me through the abstract pieces.

The exhibition is cacophonous; cello strings

twanging, another installation buzzing like an out-of-tune radio and the sound of seagulls squawking while waves crash against Brighton beach.

I wanted to know how many of the works were produced by visually impaired artists. A BlindArt representative said that visually impaired artists had created a number of them, but the charity preferred not to dwell on an artists' sight, focusing instead on the quality of the work.

I welcome an approach where visually impaired artists' work is placed on an equal footing with that of sighted people – hats off to BlindArt and all the artists.

● *Sense & Sensuality encourages visitors to experience art through smell, touch, sight and sound, with British Sign Language, braille and audio-description. It runs from 14 September until 8 October at the Bankside Gallery in London, admission is free, tel: 020 7928 7521 or visit: www.banksidegallery.com*

For what's on visit: www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Van with a view



Helen Smith finds the Fiat Doblo Liberty reminiscent of a bread van but more than accommodating for taller travellers



BOB HOBBS PHOTOGRAPHY

The biggest expense in making a vehicle accessible for a wheelchair user is in lowering the floor – which can cost anything from £7,000 – making this type of conversion unaffordable for many people.

But having a floor lowered is no longer the only way for a wheelchair user to get into the back of a vehicle. There are now several vehicles on the market without lowered floors. One of these is the Fiat Doblo Liberty, which can be adapted by the Jubilee Automotive Group.

Like many wheelchair accessible vehicles, the Fiat Doblo has a bread-van-type appearance but, unlike a bread van, it has lots of windows. I was told it is like a conservatory on a hot day, which is why all Doblos come with air conditioning.

The reason a Doblo doesn't have its floor lowered is because the ramp is quite long and there is a belt system that attaches to

the front of the wheelchair to help pull it up. This ramp is pretty steep and as I went in, my front wheels were coming off the ramp. This was initially quite alarming as I thought I was going to tip over backwards, but there is no way the wheelchair can tip back because of the belt attachment.

The belt is controlled by an assistant who stands behind the chair to steady it. The ramp has sections which fold out, so when it's folded back into the vehicle the driver can still see

'This was initially quite alarming as I thought I was going to tip over backwards'

out of the back window.

Once I was in, my chair was fixed in by a four-point wheelchair tie-down system. With a wheelchair in the back, there is room for three other people, including the driver –

without a wheelchair, five people could fit.

When there is a wheelchair in the back, the two passenger seats fold up and a cover has been made to fit over the top, which makes it look a bit smarter.

There are eight different types of Doblo from which to choose – the 1.3 JTD Multi-jet Active "Family" has seven seats including the driver.

The model I tested was very comfortable. There were lots of windows at the front, but I was the wrong height and had to crouch down or sit up really straight too see anything. However, if I sat on a cushion my view would have been fine.

This vehicle would be good for anyone who is tall or has a high wheelchair because there is loads of head room and an "extra-high roof option".

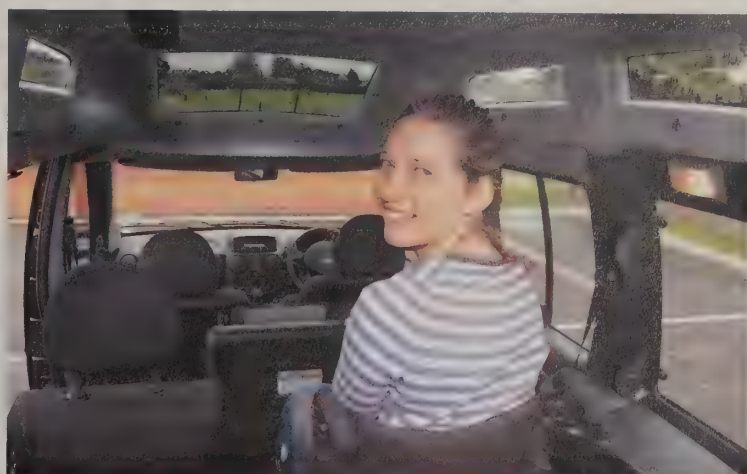
To get out, the belt is attached to the front of the

wheelchair and you reverse back down the slope. Like going in, it feels somewhat precarious but once you realise you are not going to tip over it's not so bad.

If you need to travel in your wheelchair the Doblo isn't a bad option. It costs from £9,795 excluding VAT, which is very affordable. This converted

vehicle isn't available on Motability but there are finance options available. For example, the 1.4P active Doblo is advertised at being available for £188.98 a month for 60 months with a deposit of £99.

● For more information contact Jubilee Auto, tel: 0800 634 8407 or visit: www.jubileauto.net



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Suzuki Life & Liberty

Suzuki Liberty & Suzuki Life are totally unique. Suzuki Liberty offers full wheelchair access in a compact motorcar whilst Suzuki Life delivers full independence for wheelchair drivers with fully automated access solutions and disabled driver hand controls plus a fully **automatic gearbox**. Whilst others in the UK have focused their attentions on producing converted vans, we took the view that people with disabilities deserved better. The outcome; two superb mobility products. **New & Used in stock**

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Mercedes Vaneo Liberty

Mercedes Benz Vaneo Liberty is a sophisticated wheelchair accessible MPV offering almost 60 inches of wheelchair passenger rear headroom and four passenger seats as standard. Over recent years this superb vehicle has proved to be enormously popular, offering dignified mobility solutions for those requiring space, style and practicality. We presently have a selection of one owner, low mileage pre-owned vehicles in both petrol, semi automatic and diesel derivative. **Don't miss them**

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Volkswagen T5 Liberty



Volkswagen New T5 Liberty is the best value for money accessible MPV we have ever seen and is also available as a wheelchair driver solution from Jubilee. This wonderfully spacious & economical turbo diesel can be specified in two wheelbases and with a whole range of engine and gearbox options including the impressive 6 speed tiptronic. We are able to offer both new and used models including :- low floor, chairlifts & low impact conversions. See them all at www.jubileeauto.net

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Time to get equal

Time to Get Equal through training

All public organisations will need to meet the requirements of the Disability Equality Duty which comes into force in December. Many larger bodies are required to produce a Disability Equality Scheme.

Scope is helping a large range of organisations get to grips with these challenges and responsibilities, by providing a range of informative and low cost training courses. All courses are delivered by disabled trainers and are held in London, Manchester and Wakefield.

For more information on the Autumn courses visit: www.diversityworks.scope.org.uk alternatively you can speak to one of the team on **020 7619 7725** or write to us at: **Diversity Works, Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW.**

Time to Get Equal – Employment

Scope has joined with the Department of Trade and Industry and Amicus to provide support to disabled people in the work place through the Disability Champions project.

Disability champions are trade union representatives with an interest in disability issues.

At present there are around 200 champions working in a wide range of jobs within both the public and private sector but our aim is to encourage every employer to have at least one disability champion. They have a number of roles including

- negotiating “reasonable adjustments”
- raising awareness of disability issues
- conducting access audits of buildings documents and policies
- liaising with external organisations and other champions.

To enable disability champions to perform the tasks listed above and much more a dedicated five-day training course has been written as part of the TUC training programme. To receive further information about the course and how to become a disability champion visit the website www.disabilitychampions.com and complete the online form.

For further information call: **David Parr 01482 382512**
Margie Woodward 01794 513781
 Or email info@disabilitychampions.com

TIME TO GET EQUAL

IN THE WORKPLACE

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DISABILITY CHAMPIONS @WORK

www.disabilitychampions.com

scope

dti

For more information on the articles featured see www.timetogetequal.org.uk or contact Abigail Lock on 020 7619 7253.

Easy cleaning

Bathing can ease aching joints and tired muscles, so people can be reluctant to give up their bath. Lifts provide a way of continuing to bathe independently by taking the effort out of getting in and out. There are many different models: manual or battery powered, some reclining, others providing better support. Lucy Andrews provides a few examples

ROLLER BATHING



What? The Mermaid bath lift has a band-style seat that attaches to a roller, mounted on the wall alongside the bath. The roller unwinds to lower a user into the bath and winds up again to raise them up.

Movement is battery powered and controlled by buttons either on the wall unit or handset. The lift is discrete and easy to pack away, and lowers users right down to the bottom of the bath where they can lie back, but because the band unwinds from one side only, users must be able to manoeuvre themselves during raising and lowering. Capacity is 127kg.

How much? £995 plus fitting

Where? Nationwide Mobility, tel: 0800 316 9798 or visit: www.nationwide-mobility.co.uk

LIE BACK AND RELAX

What? The Abletech Bathlift is a freestanding, chair-style lift that is placed inside the bath and lowers a user into a semi-reclined position. Movement of the seat is controlled by a gas strut that must be adjusted according to the user's weight with a choice of increments, between 50 and 100kg.

An optional side flap makes sliding across onto the seat easier, which then gently lowers and locks in the down position. To return to the top of the bath, a user must release the locking lever and lean forwards.

How much? £450

Where? Evac Chair International Ltd, tel: 0121 706 6744 or visit: www.paraid.co.uk



ON THE MOVE

What? The Handybather is an inflatable bath lift that is linked to a portable air compressor outside the bath. The seat may not be as stable as bath lifts that have a solid seat, but it has the advantage that it lowers users right down to the bottom of the bath for a deep soak. It is also lightweight and therefore more portable.

How much? £611

Where? Mangar International Ltd, tel: 01544 267 674 or visit: www.mangar.co.uk

PUT YOUR FEET UP

What? Bath lifts cannot help user to get his or her legs up over the side of a bath, so if this is a problem, look at the Windsor Bath, which has an integral swivel seat and the option of a leg rest to lift and support the legs during transfer. The bath is available in two sizes, 1500 x 745mm and 1700 x 745mm, and has a user weight limit of 152kg (140kg with leglift).

How much? £3,995 with leglift

Where? Gainsborough Bathrooms Ltd, tel: 01527 594 203 or visit: www.gainsboroughsbds.co.uk



LONGER LEGS

What? The Neptune Bath Lift is battery powered and designed to sit right back in the bath to give a user good leg room. The lift can be used in standard baths and in corner baths with the addition of an extended seat flap. A large rocker switch controls up and down movement and includes a warning light to indicate that the battery needs recharging. Optional padding for the seat unit. Capacity is 160kg.

How much? From £524

Where? Mountway Ltd, tel: 01495 723 300 or visit: www.mountway.com

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Dear Rachel

● love and loneliness ● personal problems ● advice and support

Rachel Wilson, who is disabled herself, has spent many years advising on disability matters. Write to her at *Disability Now*, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW or email your problem to editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



Understanding Raynaud's

I have Raynaud's disease in both hands. Does anyone else have this? Does it get better and are any drug treatments available?
Pam, via email

Raynaud's disease commonly affects the hands and feet. It causes numbness and tingling because the blood supply is restricted – although the exact cause is not always known.

It is important to establish whether you have Raynaud's as a single condition or whether it is an additional symptom of another condition; the latter can have greater health implications. Your GP can confirm what type of Raynaud's you have.

Raynaud's cannot be cured, but it can be treated by drugs which open the blood vessels and improve circulation. Your GP will advise of any treatments which might be suitable.

Keeping warm and not smoking will also help.

You might find it useful to contact the Arthritis Research Campaign or the Raynaud's Association. These organisations produce factsheets and offer telephone advice.

● *The Arthritis Research Campaign*, tel: 0870 850 5000

or visit: www.arc.org.uk

● *Raynaud's & Scleroderma Association*, tel: 01270 872 776 or visit: www.raynauds.org.uk

Cleaner wanted

How can I get some help cleaning my flat? It has not been cleaned since the beginning of the year when my cleaner stopped coming. I am unable to clean the flat myself.
William, Dungannon

If you cannot keep your flat clean, you may be eligible for support from social services; it is not clear from your letter whether you are currently in receipt of any support.

If you already have a support package, you could speak to your care manager or social worker to see if it can be amended to cover cleaning.

If you do not receive support, ask social services for an assessment of your needs, either from a social worker or an occupational therapist.

Council won't sell to me

My local council has told me that I cannot buy my council house – even though they are selling others in the street – because "I am over 65 and disabled". This

feels like discrimination, can they do this?
George, Staffordshire

I cannot comment on your personal circumstances, but perhaps the council is concerned your age means that you would have insufficient time to pay off your mortgage.

Disability should not be a reason for you to be denied the opportunity to buy your house, although the council may think that this hampers your earning capacity and therefore your ability to meet any payments.

You need to take advice from someone who knows your individual circumstances.

Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau (local office numbers are in the phone book). After you have taken advice, you may be able to argue with the council that your disability – aside from your age – should not affect your right to buy.

I hope you can resolve your dispute with the council.

The full package

I am trying to find out about environmental control systems. I would like a package to include: intercom, remote door locking/opening and closing, window opening,

Searching for a scooter

My son has cerebral palsy and although he can walk, he tires easily. I think a scooter or powered tricycle would be ideal for him, but I cannot find much information on where to get this equipment. Can you help please?
Cariad, via email

The most important thing is ensuring you get enough information so that you can make an informed decision. Your son's needs may change as he grows, and if the equipment he wants is not available through statutory funding, a mistake can be very expensive.

In the first instance, it may be worth approaching social services to see whether a scooter could be supplied through your local wheelchair service. I think this is unlikely, as your son can walk, but it would be worth making enquiries.

If any equipment needs to be privately funded, I suggest you contact Whizz-Kidz, a charity which supplies wheelchairs and other mobility equipment for disabled children. They also provide information and advice on funding and assessment. Their website has a flowchart to help you through the process of choosing equipment and deciding how it should be funded.

I hope that you find the equipment which will help your son.

● *Whizz-Kidz*, tel: 020 7223 6600, visit: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk or email: kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk

● *The Disabled Living Foundation*, tel: 0845 130 9177 or visit: www.dlf.org.uk

central heating control and lighting. I hope that you can point me in the right direction?
John, via email

Before you commit to a system, make sure you can try it before you buy it. This is easier than going to an individual company.

Contact AbilityNet who can advise on assistive technology. They also offer an assessment service and produce a number of factsheets.

I hope you get the advice you need to make an informed choice about your equipment.

● *AbilityNet*, tel: 0800 269 545 or visit: www.abilitynet.org.uk

Direct payments and DLA

I receive a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for care and mobility.

I'm interested in applying for Direct Payments. Will that affect the amount of DLA I receive?

Alison, Manchester

Your DLA payments will not be affected if you receive Direct Payments from your local social services. If you already receive support from social services, they are obliged to offer you Direct Payments and any assessment of your income should not affect your DLA.

If you are claiming support for the first time, your needs and income must be assessed to determine the amount of funding you will receive. If your needs have already been assessed, you should not need to be reassessed, unless your support needs have changed.



Help at the end of the phone

DN's telephone counsellor Lin Berwick gives disabled people and carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Disabled herself, Lin is a psychotherapeutic counsellor and Methodist local preacher, with a postgraduate diploma in homeopathic medicine. If you have something you need to discuss in confidence, talk to her on Mondays 6pm-10pm and Thursdays 1pm-5pm, tel: 01787 882 111.

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ASK THE READERS

I need a stairlift and I have looked at various makes, but they all seem similar. I can't decide which one to buy. Can anyone recommend a good product from a company with good after-sales service and which doesn't use pressure selling techniques?

Get a few quotes

Look for the safety features that should be standard on all stairlifts, such as a swivel seat, DC power and call/send devices. These features should be included in the cost.

Get a few quotes, making it clear when you arrange your appointment that you will not be making a decision then.

If any add-ons are required, ask how they will benefit you. Most importantly – choose the correct solution for your needs. Roy Williams, stairlift surveyor
• Information on stairlift basics, visit: www.stairliftadvice.co.uk

Don't agree on the spot

The stairlift industry is competitive and there are unscrupulous traders – even some big manufacturers have a poor record for after-sales service and pushy salesmen, as well as charging high prices.

It is a good idea to ask your local authority who they use.

Always get three or more quotes; this is time-consuming and intrusive but it is the only

way to make the right choice.

Never agree to buy the lift while the salesman is with you. A reputable company will respect your decision.

If the salesman pesters you or offers a discount if you buy now, be sceptical.

Ask about maintenance costs: will the company still look after your lift if you don't sign up to an expensive contract? Find out if the company has engineers locally and whether they do call-outs. Get quotes in writing and read the small print.

Christian Dunnage, Dolphin Mobility Ltd

Try before you buy

Help with funding a stairlift could be available from your local council through a disabled facilities grant. So, before proceeding with a private purchase, it's worth finding out if you qualify.

If you buy privately, engineers will visit your home before giving you a price. They need to look at the staircase and immediate environment,

such as landings and windows.

Make sure you can transfer on and off the stairlift safely, that your legs are supported by the footplate and that you can manage the controls. Disabled Living Centres* have a range of stairlifts you can try, or you can buy from a company belonging to a trade association, such as the Lift and Escalator Industry Association**.

Lucy Andrews, Disabled Living Foundation

* For addresses visit: www.assist-uk.org.uk or www.foundations.uk.com

** Lift and Escalator Industry Association, tel: 020 7935 3013 or visit: www.leia.co.uk

Visit DNonline for more advice on stairlifts and check out November's DN, for an investigation into the costs of such equipment.

NEXT MONTH'S QUESTION:

"I belong to an online car forum. Some of the members use derogatory terms regarding disabled people. I have reported this to the moderators and they took the matter seriously at first, but they are now overlooking it. Is there anything I can do? Send your answers and your own questions to "Ask the readers" at the usual address or email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk



SIMON SAYS

Personals are a great way to meet people but be careful

The quest for a partner has always been with us.

Shakespeare gives us good advice in *The Merchant of Venice*, when the prince of Morocco opens the gold casket in order to win the hand of Portia. However, all he finds is a note that reads: "all that glistens is not gold".

We should remember that, in the age of internet dating and personal ads, we cannot always rely on first impressions.

Responding to a personal ad requires caution. The person may not be who they say they are. There are a few ground rules to reduce the risks.

When you start corresponding by email or letter, don't give out your personal details too early.

Talk on the phone a couple of times to get to know the person before meeting.

Look for things that they don't say about their life.

Meet first – ideally during the day – in a public place.

Tell them you only can stay

half an hour or an hour for a coffee or lunch.

Tell a friend where you will be and arrange for them to call your mobile to check if you need help.

Ensure you can leave independently, especially if you have mobility or other impairments which restrict your independence.

Don't give out your personal details until you trust the person.

Follow your instinct. Relax, be yourself and feel in control. This is the best way to get to know people.

Personals are a great way to meet new friends and lovers. However, some people can lie and cheat convincingly. If you have any doubts, move on.

If you have a problem with someone, feel intimidated or at risk, you should report it to the publication or website.

Think before you act and you can have a fun time, as well as possibly finding the relationship you really want.

Send your relationship questions to "Simon says" at the usual postal address or email: editor@disabilitynow.org.uk

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2000 W Suzuki Wagon R, by Jubilee Group	£5,495
1999 T Master 2.2D, Ramp, 2 owners, 37,000 miles	£7,495
1998 S Brotherwood Sharan VR6, 40,000 miles, 1 owner	£12,495
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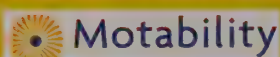
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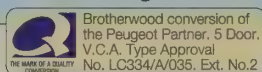
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Space Travel



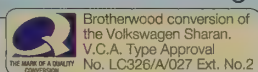
Peugeot Partner

1450mm (57") interior headroom
Converted floor length 1550mm (61")



Volkswagen Sharan

1498mm (59") interior headroom
Converted floor length 1320 (52")

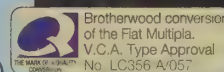


Providing maximum space for the wheelchair passenger and their family is one of the qualities of a Brotherwood converted vehicle!



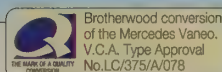
Fiat Multipla

1420mm (56") interior headroom
Converted floor length 1270mm (50")



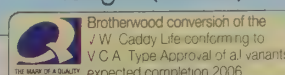
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Publications

The Young Persons Guide to MS, intended for children of parents with multiple sclerosis, has been produced by the MS Trust and is available from their website, www.ms-trust.org, tel: Mary Hicks on: 07703 498 305.

A new advice publication on brain injury, *The effects of brain injury and how to help*, can be obtained from the charity **Headway**, or the Huntercombe groups' **Nottingham Neurodisability Service**. Tel: 01625 417 800.

The Charity **Epilepsy Action** have filmed a new DVD for

children aged 7+, *My Dad has Epilepsy*, £10 plus p&p, tel: 0808 800 5050, www.epilepsy.org.uk

Contact a Family has produced two free new factsheets this summer for parents of disabled children: *Finding and Paying for Childcare*, and *Education Maintenance Allowance* – (a means-tested allowance for 16-19 year olds). Tel: 020 7608 8741 or email: louise.moffatt@cafamilly.org.uk

A new edition of *Don't Miss Out*, a guide to benefits and

support available to disabled children and their families, is now available from the **Disability Alliance**. Tel: 020 7247 8776, member.da@dial.pipex.com

Together: Working for Wellbeing has produced two new publications aiming to revolutionise service-user involvement in mental health policy and services, *A Good Practice Guide To Valuing, Respecting and Supporting Service-User Activity* and, *Service-Users Together: A Guide for Involvement*. Tel: 020 7061 3456, www.together-uk.org

Websites

NDAF has launched a new website, visit: <http://ndaf.org>.

There is a new website specialising in travel for deaf people at www.deaftravel.co.uk

The Ealing Centre for Independent Living now has its own site, see www.ecil.org

The website for the learning difficulty support-provider **Dimensions**, formerly New Era, can be seen at www.dimensions-uk.org, with regular updates and job vacancies.

www.directenquiries.com provides access details online, enabling users to quickly search for premises that meet their access requirements.

South Cheshire Crossroads, which aims to support carers of disabled people, now has its own website. www.caringforcarers.org.uk

An interactive public service website has been designed, showing the locations of disabled parking bays in 64 towns and cities in the UK. www.direct.gov.uk/disability

Drake Music is continuing its mission to create musical opportunities for disabled people with a new collaboration with SoundJunction, a composing and music learning website. www.soundjunction.org

The Disability Information Services (DISS), part of the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation, has created a national database of products and services for disabled people, which is now available for purchase for £395. Tel: 01372 841 396, www.diss.org.uk

What's On

The West Sussex Independent Living Association is holding a conference for disabled people, care professionals and other people in the field. Independence for Life, 11 October at Clair hall, Haywards Heath. Attendance is free. Tel: 01903 219482, www.ilawestsussex.org

The Care Show, with free seminars, workshops and demonstrations of new products for the care homes sector, will take place at the Birmingham NEC 25-26 October. Tel: 01425 470 666, www.careshow.co.uk

The South Central Regional Inclusion Partnership are organising their annual conference, with an emphasis on the inclusion of

children and young people, on 12-13 October. Tel: 020 8541 9048, www.ltyp.org.uk

Lynne Moxon, who teaches courses in socio-sexual skills, will be speaking at a seminar on Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Sexuality at the BAWA Centre in Bristol on 3 October. Costs apply. Tel: 0115 911 3367, conference@nas.org.uk, www.autism.org.uk/conferences

Knowing Your Rights, a RADAR regional forum with high-profile speakers and discussion focused on the Disability Equality Duty, will take place on 30 October at the South West Conference Centre in Exeter. Tel (typetalk): 18002 020 7566 0127 or visit: www.radar.org.uk

Appointments

Nigel Horne is now assistant services manager at the Home Farm Trust in Kent, a national charity for people with learning difficulties.

The Half Moon theatre company, working with young people with disabilities and from ethnic minorities, has appointed two associate directors – Paula Manning and Adam Annand.

The RNID, which represents deaf people in the UK, has a new director of communication services and development, Katherine Phipps.

Liz Felton is the new chief executive of the mental wellbeing charity Together, moving from Rethink.

Arts organisation Shape has two new staff members, Mickey Fellowes, arts development manager, and Theresa Rahman as continuing professional development co-ordinator.

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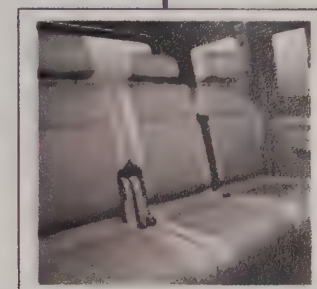
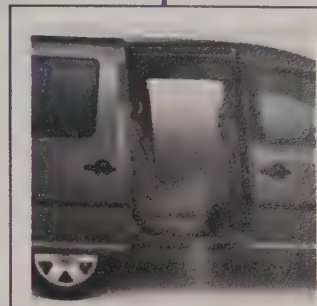
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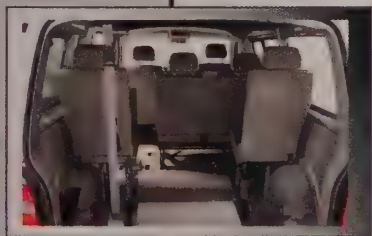
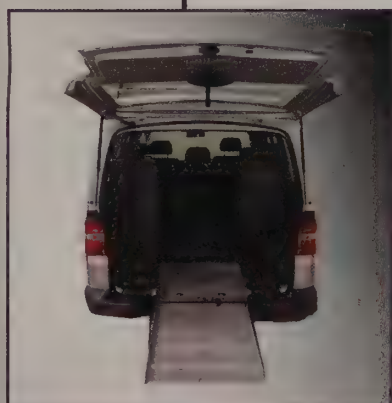
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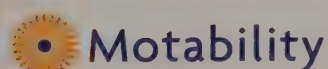
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FIAT SCUDO COMBI MONTANA 2.0 JTD Date first registered: 05/04/03, Blue, 3 seats, Condition: Good, 5 speed manual, 30,000 miles, 5 door, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking, Twin Side Doors. **£9,995**

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FIAT DOBLO ASPEN 1.3 MULTIJET Date first registered: 05/06/06, Blue, 3 seats, As new, 500 miles, 5 door, Air Bag, Air conditioning, Electric reels, Electric winch, Electric windows, Full width lightweight ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, One rear saloon seat, Power Steering, Remote Central Locking. **£12,200**

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FIAT SCUDO COMBI MONTANA 2.0 JTD Date registered: 05/04/03, Blue, 3 seats, 5 speed manual, 30,000 miles, 5 door, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, One rear saloon seat, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking, Service History, Twin Side Doors. **£9,995**

RENAULT TRAFIC SWB 1.9 DCI 100 TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 05/12/03, Blue, 5 seats, 1 owner, Good Condition throughout, 6 speed manual, 29,000 miles, MOT until: 06/06/07, Air Bag, Could take 2 wheelchairs, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, One quick release removable rear seat, Power Steering, Radio/single CD player, Remote Central Locking, Service History, Short wheelbase, Side load door, Single front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£11,500**

PEUGEOT BOXER SWB 1.9 LTR DIESEL Date first registered: 13/04/1999, White, 5 seats, 2 owners, Good condition, 5 Speed manual, 98,000 miles, MOT until: 30/09/2006, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Non-Slip Flooring, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Short wheelbase, Side load door, Soft cord trimmed interior, Twin front passenger seat, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£5,250**

KIA SEDONA 2.9 LTR TURBO DIESEL Date first registered: 03/12/02, Metallic green, 4 seats, Excellent Condition, 5 speed manual, Mileage: 18,000 miles, 5 door, A.B.S., Air Bag, Air conditioning, Electric Mirrors, Electric reels, Electric windows, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Rear Saloon Heating/Cooling System, Remote Central Locking, Two rear saloon passenger seats. **£13,950**

RENAULT KANGOO 1.4 LTR PETROL Date first registered: 04/04/01, Metallic red, 3 seats, 2 owners, 5 speed manual, 40,000 miles, 5 door, Air Bag, Electric Winch, Full Width Lightweight Ramp, Lowered rear floor for wheelchair access, One rear saloon seat, Power Steering, Radio/cassette player, Remote Central Locking, Service History. **£6,850 plus VAT**

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WARNING

We have been warned about a scam involving people from overseas who say they want to buy a product and who offer to pay using cheques, Western Union money transfers and certified cheques. Although no DN readers to our knowledge have been hit by this, please be particularly wary of accepting cheques from overseas. For more information, visit the Metropolitan Police website.

• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

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North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDaf), in partnership with Kaite O'Reilly (Arts and Humanities Research Council Creative Fellow), and Liverpool Hope University will host the second of two regional symposia. The symposium will be led by Disabled and d/Deaf international practitioners/artists and academics, who will present papers, work demonstrations, presentations, and panel discussions.

Speakers/practitioners include:
 Petra Kupperts USA, Mat Fraser UK, Jonathan Meth UK, The Fingersmiths Ltd (Jean St Clair, Kaite O'Reilly and Jeni Draper) UK and Alicia Grace UK.

Booking:
 £10 for individuals; £20 for organisations/institutions. This includes lunch and refreshments throughout the day. To book a place on the symposium please contact Alison Jones, NWDaf, MPAC Building, 1-27 Bridport Street, Liverpool L3 5QF. Tel: 0151 707 1733, Fax: 0151 708 9355. Email: alison.jones@nwdaf.co.uk

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We will be holding pre application briefing sessions in Central London on Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd October 2006. To reserve a place, please contact Bronwen Brotherhood on 020 7847 8883.

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For an application pack, please contact Bronwen Brotherhood (our representative at Advanced Human Resources) on 020 7847 8883, email bronwen@advancedhumanresources.com or write to Advanced Human Resources, Warnford Court, 29 Throgmorton Street, London EC2N 2AT.

Closing date for receipt of returned applications is 5.30pm on Friday 13th October 2006.

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• Holidays (Cont'd pg 39)

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The East Sussex Disability Association (ESDA) provides and promotes Welfare Services for disabled people, primarily in East Sussex. It works hard to secure and support the right of all disabled people to have choice and control in their lives and be included as equal members of society. With a budget of £800,000 and 28 committed staff, ESDA runs a range of projects providing training, information and advice, and promoting social inclusion for disabled people.

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Eastbourne

ESDA's current CEO is due to retire shortly and a new CEO is sought to lead and drive the charity through its next phase of development. Its Trustees wish to increase ESDA's profile and influence, building on its reputation for innovation and quality to achieve an ambitious vision which will see continued growth and expansion over the next five years.

This is an exceptional opportunity for which we seek a strong and visionary leader committed to promoting the rights of disabled people and working towards social inclusion. A deep understanding of the discrimination that disabled people face in gaining equal access to society is essential. With this in mind, ESDA is seeking to appoint a disabled person to the role of Chief Executive - only disabled people are being invited to apply. To succeed in this role you will need to be a strategic thinker with a track record in change management and organisation development. In addition, you must be committed to the social model of disability and be able to communicate effectively with stakeholders with a wide range of backgrounds.

ESDA will make all reasonable adjustments and aims to ensure equality of opportunity to candidates, both during the recruitment process and, for the successful candidate, in their employment and development.

Please download further details of this position and apply online to our advising consultant, Richard Holland, at www.cfappointments.com For an informal discussion, please call Richard on 020 7953 1190 or e-mail him at rholland@cfappointments.com

The closing date for applications is 9 October 2006.

For further information about ESDA, please visit their website at www.esda.org.uk



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Charming converted barns, superb self-catering accommodation in rural France, near Saumur. Two wheelchair/disabled accessible ground floor cottages. 'Goldfinch' sleeps 2/4, while 'Heron' sleeps 4/6. Contact Stu & Syb Bradley or Sheila Bingham on 0033 241 67 09 78, or e-mail us at: info@loire-gites.com Web: www.loire-gites.com

Cotswold Charm

Self-catering cottages at Top Farm in Chipping Campden

Special edition offer: 15% off 2007 prices if funds received before 30 September.

Tranquil hamlet of Westington 600 yards from historic curved High Street.

4 cottages, ensuite, sleep 3-6 each. Rick Cottage (6) – wheelchair access ground floor kitchen with adjust height table, etc., ensuite bed, lounge & conservatory. Hoist hire & specialist care, etc. available via links on our website.

Web: www.cotswoldcharm.co.uk
Call Michael on 01386 840164. Fax: 01386 841883. Email: cotswoldcharm@fsmail.net

Dordogne – SW France

Two stunning wheelchair accessible properties in the idyllic rural setting of Perigord Vert. The Grande Maison sleeps up to 10, the Petite Maison up to 5. Contact Ed Passant on 01233 731097 or ed@accessholidays.com www.accessholidays.com

CYPRUS, CORAL BAY, PAPHOS

"Come on in, the water's lovely!"

Para/tetraplegic friendly adapted luxurious villa apartment with large HEATED POOL and POOL HOIST. Local beach, shops, doctor and paraplegic owner & wife nearby. Also villas with own pools, limited mobility friendly.



Tel: Irene 02084406219

e-mail: irene@sundancevillas.co.uk
www.sundancevillas.co.uk



Kids is a national charity working towards a world in which all Disabled children and young people realise their aspirations and their right to an inclusive community which supports them and their families.

Kids is recognised as the leading voluntary organisation for the provision and promotion of inclusive play and leisure. Kids National Development Division delivers an extensive programme of workforce development to support inclusion in universal play and childcare services. This is provided through the Playwork Inclusion Project (funded by the DfES) and a National Training Unit, and in partnership with sector skills councils (Playwork and Children's), awarding bodies and a range of voluntary and statutory organisations. This programme will be taken forward and further developed by the:

NATIONAL TRAINING MANAGER

£30,580pa pro rata inc. London weighting (fixed term to March 2009)

With experience of vocational training development and national training standards, you will manage a programme to develop and produce a range of training and quality tools on inclusion for the children's workforce. As a qualified trainer and assessor with commissioning experience, you will manage and develop Kids National Training Unit. You will have a strong commitment to equalities, excellent communication skills and be a highly motivated and creative person. Four days/week, based in London with some travel across England.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Thursday 5 October 2006

Assessment and Interviews will be held in London w/c 9 October 2006

To receive full details and an application pack please email: training@kids.org.uk quoting ref: PIP06/06 or send a large SAE to: PIP, Kids, 6 Aztec Row, Berners Road, London N1 0PW (please state preferred format) www.kids.org.uk Reg charity no: 275936

For an informal discussion about this post please contact Joanna Ryam, NDD Director on 020 7359 3073. Kids strives to be an equal opportunities employer. All Disabled people who meet the person specification will be offered an interview.

department for

education and skills

creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

• Holidays (Cont'd)

Hoe Grange Holidays
Luxurious SC log cabins
In the Derbyshire Peak District

- Full wheelchair access
- Wet-room style shower & grab rails
- On working farm

Tel: 01629 540262
www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk

Self-Catering Apartments in Brittany, France
Book Early for 2007
Four brand new 2 bed luxury apartments in La Roche Derrien, in a converted cotton mill on the banks of the River Jaudy. Purpose built for accessibility, all with level access showers.
www.ineedaholidaytoo.com
0800 949 6801 or +33 (0)2 96 91 55 97

Hartgrove Farm
Shaftsbury Dorset
Award winning holiday cottages on working farm. A really lovely holiday for disabled guests and their families. Glorious countryside and views. Logfires. C.H. Wheel-in shower. Mobile Hoist and other equipment.
Tel: 01747 811830
www.hartgrovefarm.co.uk

Normandy France
Magnificent accessible farm house in beautiful 1 acre garden. Sleeps 14 (6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms) huge G.F. ensuite bedroom, Wheel-in shower, bath, mobile hoist. Superb heated swimming pool, 25 mins unspoilt sandy beaches. Only 1 hr from port.
Tel: 01747 812019
www.normandyfarmhouses.co.uk

• Accommodation

- Searching for accessible or adapted property?
- Accessible or adapted property to sell or let?
- Looking for an approved estate agent?

The Accessible Property Register
web: www.accessible-property.org.uk
Tel: 0114 2307058

Portland House Guest House,
Herefordshire. Between Ross on Wye and Monmouth. Set in an area of outstanding natural beauty. The car park and entrance hall are at ground level – NO STEPS!
The Lloyd Suite, just off the ground floor hallway, awarded a M2 level accessibility rating. 01600 890757.
www.portlandguesthouse.co.uk

HOLIDAY BUNGALOWS BUILT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE
IN THE PARKLAND GROUNDS OF STRODE PARK, HERNE, KENT
OVERHEAD TRACKING, ELECTRIC HOISTS, HI/LO BEDS, FULLY EQUIPPED
brochure from STRODE PARK FOUNDATION HERNE CT6 7NE
01227 373292 FAX 369033
e-mail info@strodepark.org.uk
website: www.strodepark.org.uk
OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND

Hertfordshire
Petasfield Stables Holiday Cottages, plus, building now for 2007, two bedroom cottages. Stunning, wheelchair accessible converted stables, with beautiful views over the Hertfordshire countryside. Riding, carriage driving and stable management courses available. Sleeps four – six people. Wheel-in showers, shower chair provided. Electric sink and hob riser in one kitchen. Private wild flower and sensory garden. Historic Hertford town centre 1.5 miles. Easy reach of London, Cambridge and St Albans and major road links. For more information contact: Helen Clark: 01992 504201. helen@petasfieldcottages.co.uk
www.petasfieldcottages.co.uk

Tell us what you think about our Race and disability equality scheme

Our principal aim is to secure an effective school workforce that improves children's life chances.

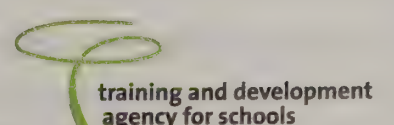
We have produced a draft of our *Race and disability equality scheme* (RDES) for consultation. The scheme sets out our vision for promoting race and disability equality in everything we do. Our action plans detail the specific steps we intend to take to make the vision a reality.

We want you to tell us what you think about our RDES by visiting our website, www.tda.gov.uk/rdes

To request the RDES in another language or format please e-mail corporatecomms@tda.gov.uk or phone 020 7023 8087 and we will consider with you how to meet your needs.

The consultation will run until mid-October. A final version of the RDES will be published in December and will be available through our website at www.tda.gov.uk/rdes

www.tda.gov.uk



• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

Bright and vibrant, just like us

It's an exciting time for East Thames Group working in east London and Essex – our key areas of operation. With a focus on the Thames Gateway and the Olympics we are committed to more than double in size by the year 2012.

eastTHAMES

Come together.

Forging communities. Building neighbourhoods. That's what drives us to succeed. Providing 13,000 homes across East London and Essex, means our level of involvement is so much more than a housing association. With a wide range of roles available, from care, housing and development, to IT, HR and Finance, we're interested in hearing from all members of the community. If you're enthusiastic about what we do, or have first hand experience of the service we provide, then we have a place for you.

**Visit us at Forum 3, 13th-14th October 2006,
The Business Design Centre, Islington,
London or find out all about us online.**

www.east-thames.co.uk

We are an equal opportunities employer.



The Forum of Mobility Centres

Registered Charity 298178

Chief Executive

£41,655 — £46,116 (NJC Scale SP52-57)
+ 6% pension

The Forum of Mobility Centres is the fast growing umbrella body for Mobility Centres across the UK, supporting their work in assisting and advising disabled and older people on all aspects of personal mobility — with a particular emphasis on maintaining or developing their ability to drive. The Forum is responsible for Mobility Centre accreditation, policy, standard setting, training, UK wide development and external liaison with relevant stakeholders.

We need a dynamic individual with a passion for growth and development, who has a proven history of business planning and project management. The successful applicant will have an understanding of the mobility needs of disabled people, a commitment to the social model of disability and be able to travel regularly to meetings across the UK. Mileage allowance is payable for business use, or a vehicle may be available.

The location of this post is negotiable.

For an information pack contact Gary Abbs tel: 01842 753 029
or email: garya@kmacmobil.org.uk

For informal discussion regarding the post, please contact
Liz Whiteman Tel: 01332 371 929.

CLOSING DATE: 13 October INTERVIEWS: 1 November

Applications from disabled people positively welcomed.
The Forum of Mobility Centres is committed to Equal Opportunities.

scope

employment service

Are you disabled?

Are you claiming incapacity benefit or job seeker allowance?

Do you want to secure a permanent job with a minimum 16 hours per week?

If you have said yes to the three questions above then we can probably help you.

Scope's Employment Service is part of **SCOPE**, the national charity. As a provider of **WORKSTEP**, a government sponsored programme designed to assist disabled people in entering the workplace we can provide you with support in finding a suitable job; furthermore, that support will continue, should you require it, when you are employed. At no cost to you at any stage.

The employers we work with represent large corporations, public sector organisations and local businesses. There are currently a number of vacancies nationwide for a range of different jobs, in a number of different industries, for example:

- Customer advisors in DIY retail
- HO and store vacancies with a national charity
- Administrative posts in central government
- Retail jobs in a large supermarket chain
- Call centre jobs in financial services and telecommunications

Given the span of vacancies the employers we work with have, we are looking for a range of experiences and skills in the people registering on our job seeker database.

Interested? Please send your CV. You can:

- **Email:** employment.support@scope.org.uk
- **Write:** Scope s Employment Service, Suite 1A, Kings Hall, St Ives Business Park, Parsons Green, St Ives PE27 4WY
- **Call:** Kirsty Barton on 01480 309619

Once we have received your CV we will contact you if we need to check any information. We will then enter your details on our database, regularly check for suitable positions. Once we have identified a potential job, one of our Employment Officers will help you prepare for the interview, and provide you with the advice and support you may need.

We look forward to hearing from you.

For disabled people achieving equality

• Recruitment (on page 37 to 42)

Make your next role as important as ours.

DFID, the Department for International Development: leading the British government's fight against world poverty.

We offer opportunities in our headquarters in London and East Kilbride – but also in many developing countries, with staff based in DFID offices plus British Embassies and High Commissions around the world. We have roles for leaders; professionals; specialists; managers; graduates and administrators.

DFID is an equal opportunities employer and selection is on merit. Applications are welcomed from all parts of the community and we actively encourage interest from women, ethnic minority groups and those with a disability. We will make any reasonable adjustments should they be required. Candidates should be UK Nationals, nationals of a member state of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Commonwealth citizens with the right to work in the UK.

You can find out more about us, and our work, on our website www.dfid.gov.uk. You'll also find information about specific vacancies, opportunities, and an electronic application on the site.

**DFID**Department for
International
Developmentwww.dfid.gov.uk

• Services

ROYAL DEVON & EXETER NHS FOUNDATION TRUST
Mardon Neuro-Rehabilitation Centre**MARDON NEURO REHABILITATION CENTRE**

Wonford Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4UD. Tel: 01392 208580/2 Fax: 01392 662929
email: www.Joan.Collcott@rdehc-tr.swest.nhs.uk

Mardon specialises in neurological rehabilitation assessments and treatment programmes for people with neurological conditions and brain injuries. The centre provides a consultant-led, multidisciplinary team that offers a wide range of health services for individuals with neurological conditions. The team also work closely with families and carers. Mardon promotes health improvements relevant to individuals over the age of 16 years and works with other agencies to help facilitate re-integration into the community.

Out of area referrals, legal and insurance work welcome.
Brochure is available upon request.

**BIRKDALE PAEDIATRIC & ADULT NEURO CLINIC**

Advice and treatment from newborn babies to adults.
A wide range of conditions treated, some of these include
movement, posture, balance, walking, coordination,
hand-function and learning difficulties.

Specialise in cerebral palsy and neurological conditions.
Farshideh Bondarenko DIP PHYSIO MCSP SRP.

web: www.neuro-physio.co.uk tel: 0208 998 9403

DEADLINE

DN Extra October
2006 published
7 October. Classified
deadlines: Booking
and copy:
27 September.

Disability Now
November 2006 pub-
lished 28 October.
Classified deadlines:
Booking: 13 October.
Copy: 17 October.

SEND US YOUR SMALLS...

...and make a big
impression. Small ads
in DN reach over 60,000
people for just £9 a
line. All small ads must
be paid for in advance.
If you want to adver-
tise, please use the
form provided. Send it
with a cheque for the
total to Disability Now,
6 Market Road, London
N7 9PW.

**Brent Association
of Disabled
People (BADP)****INFORMATION ADVICE & RECEPTION OFFICER**

35 hrs per week. Salary £22913-£24249 per annum inclusive of L.W.

Annual Leave 25 Days per year.

BADP Wishes to recruit a person to this exciting and challenging post.

Person appointed will have the following experience/skills:-

- Information/advice experience background.
- Information Communication Technology experience.
- Ability to recruit and supervise volunteers.
- Understanding of working in a diverse community.
- Knowledge of disability issues.
- Excellent communicator.

The deadline for returning of application forms is 5.00pm Friday 6th October 2006.

Interviews will be held week beginning 23rd October 2006

Application pack (Please do not send C.V's) available from:-

Kathleen Kennedy, BADP Administrator

Brent Association of Disabled People

Willesden Centre for Health and Care

Robson Avenue, Willesden, London NW10 3SG

Tel: 020 8451 3822 ext.224 **Fax:** 020 8451 7803

e-mail: admin@badp.org **Website:** www.brentadp.co.uk

Applications are particularly welcome from disabled people.

Please state format required: - Large Print, Braille or disk.

CONDITIONS

Disability Now maintains the right to amend or withdraw lineage adverts without prior notice. All adverts must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Telephone numbers and addresses will not be placed in personal adverts, for confidentiality. Instead, Box numbers will be provided. Likewise, telephone numbers and addresses will not be given out over the telephone if requested.

Box Numbers can be requested for non-personal adverts. However, it may limit the response to it. If you want to advertise documents, goods or services contact Patrick Durham-Matthews tel: 020 7619 7336, fax: 020 7619 7331.

Lineage adverts can only be used by private individuals. All commercial enquiries must be addressed to Patrick Durham-Matthews (see contact details).

DN cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of adverts or letters during forwarding. It is the responsibility of the advertiser to check the content of their advert, and to ensure any abbreviations cannot be misunderstood.

East Midlands Police Authorities



Appointment of Independent Members

A Police Authority is a body of 5 independent members who, together with 9 councillors and 3 magistrates, are responsible for securing an efficient and effective police force, consulting the public about the work of the police and building a partnership between the police and the local communities. The East Midlands has five Police Authorities covering Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. New independent members are needed in each of these areas.

Independent members are expected to:

- attend all Authority meetings and appropriate committees and panels;
- participate in public consultation on local policing issues, including evening meetings and public speaking;
- keep abreast of developments in both local and national policing; and
- represent the Authority in discussions with interested parties.

On average, a commitment of at least 7 hours per week is required, for which an allowance and expenses are payable.

Appointments are normally for a term of four years, starting in April 2007. You must be over 21, live or work within the area covered by the Police Authority (and have done so for at least a year prior to appointment) and not be otherwise disqualified.

We are looking for people with:

- good communication skills and a willingness to seek out and listen to the views of all sections of the local community on policing issues;
- relevant skills, experience and knowledge (for example in management, business, finance, community or race-relations); and
- the ability to represent a broad range of local communities and challenge accepted views in a constructive way.

The five East Midlands Police Authorities wish to reflect the composition of the area and welcome applications from all eligible people – irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability or other factors. We want our independent membership to represent as diverse a range of people as possible.

The closing date for applications is 27th October 2006

For more information and to apply, please contact your local Authority.

For Derbyshire Police Authority call 01773 573 775 or visit www.derbyshire.police.uk/policeauthority

For Leicestershire Police Authority call 0116 248 2691 or visit www.leics-pa.police.uk

For Lincolnshire Police Authority call 01522 558022 or visit www.lincolnshire-pa.gov.uk

For Northamptonshire Police Authority call 01604 887430 or visit www.northantspoliceauthority.org.uk

For Nottinghamshire Police Authority 0115 977 3078 or visit www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/authority



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
POLICE AUTHORITY
Ensuring Quality Policing

scope

About cerebral palsy.
For disabled people achieving equality.

Time to get equal

DN

disabilitynow

Ensure disability rights hits the headlines

Key media positions in North London

Scope's mission is to drive the change to make our society the first where disabled people achieve equality – a society where disabled people are valued and have the same human rights as others. As the leading national disability organisation focusing on people with cerebral palsy, we run groundbreaking campaigns, provide services built on the principles of choice and control and offer vital support to disabled people and their families. We are at the start of a whole new wave of activity and this is an exciting time for people who are passionate about equality issues to join us and really make a difference.

Media and Public Relations Manager, Scope

£38 – £45K (including London weighting)

Reporting to the Head of Communications, you will lead our media and public relations team, applying high-level strategic thinking and influencing skills to all of our media output and public relations work. With a proven track record in managing national, local and specialist media campaigns, you will offer expert advice, planning and leadership, maintaining excellent relationships with media contacts and key stakeholders. You will be an exceptional communicator and people manager with a keen interest in current affairs and understanding of the voluntary sector.

Reporter, DN

£24.5K (incl London weighting)

The UK's leading disability newspaper and website (www.disabilitynow.org.uk) – which is published by Scope – needs an experienced journalist to help keep us first with the news, support our campaigns and write features, ranging from investigations to profiles. You should have at least one year's post-qualification (NCTJ or equivalent) experience and be enthusiastic, flexible, able to meet tight deadlines and feel comfortable interviewing people at all levels, from David Blunkett to grassroots campaigners. **This post is reserved for a disabled person with a recognised impairment, condition or long-term limiting illness.**

Temporary Marketing Manager, DN

£27K pro-rata (incl London weighting; six-month maternity contract, from December)

DN also needs an enthusiastic person – with at least two years' marketing experience in publishing – to help promote DN and increase its readership. We are looking for someone with the flair and knowledge to increase our circulation through subscriptions and newsstand sales, increase our web visitor

numbers, strengthen brand awareness and identify promotional opportunities against a limited budget. You must be IT literate, possess excellent people skills and understand ABC rules and subscription procedures. There may be opportunities to extend this role to include wider duties within Scope.

Temporary Sales Executive, DN

£24.5K pro-rata (incl London weighting; six-month contract)

An experienced sales executive is also required to run DN's recruitment and classified advertising, both on paper and online. One minute you will be booking an advert for a CEO post, the next you will be helping a reader sell his or her adapted car. You will also be expected to support a number of DN's commercial activities, from exhibitions to acting up in the advertising/display manager's absence. You must be an excellent communicator and able to work on your own initiative and within a small team. You should be organised, flexible, pay attention to detail, able to work to tight deadlines and be IT literate. There may be opportunities to extend this role to include wider duties within Scope.

For application packs, email: ivy.broadhead@scope.org.uk, tel: 020 7619 7324 or write to: Ivy Broadhead, Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW – specifying which role you are interested in and stating your preferred format for a pack. For more information, visit www.scope.org.uk/jobs

Closing date for completed applications: Monday 9 October 2006.

We are committed to equal opportunities. We particularly welcome applications from disabled people and guarantee interviews to suitably qualified disabled applicants. Your personal direct experience and/or knowledge of disability will be seen as an advantage.

Scope is a registered charity, no 208231.



NUVO SLATTED BATH BOARD

Nottingham Rehab Supplies is offering six DN readers the chance to win a Nuvo Slatted Bath Board worth £15.95 each.

The Nuvo slatted bath board combines classic styling with the latest design technology. It has several unique features such as stainless steel fittings, swivel brackets to fit all bath shapes and over-moulded ribbed pads for secure fixing.

According to Sandra King, Brand Director of NRS, the slatted bath board is considered the most advanced on the market: "It's well engineered with a high standard of durability, offering better safety and ease of use, together with optimum comfort and stability. It has great aesthetics and is very much the next generation of bathing aids."

For your chance to win, tick 'Nuvo' in the entry form.

To find out more about the NRS product range or to receive a catalogue, tel: 0845 121 8111, email: customerservice@nrs-uk.co.uk or visit: www.nrs-uk.co.uk



WHITE NOISE RELAXATION CDS

YourFavouriteShop.com is giving away 20 Restful Rain White Noise CDs to DN readers, worth £8.49 each.

White Noise is entirely natural, healthy and free from side effects. The sound is steady, repetitive and peaceful. It can help calm and relax you while masking distracting noises such as television or traffic. White Noise CDs can help you get a sound night sleep – just pop the CD on last thing at night and

you can relax to tranquil nature sounds.

There are different White Noise relaxation CDs. The CDs are carefully recorded, re-mixed and digitally mastered to create white noise at its finest.

For your chance to win, tick 'White Noise' in the entry form.

For more information and to sample the White Noise CDs, email: sales@yourfavouriteshop.com or visit www.YourFavouriteShop.com



Great for:
Falling Asleep
Sound Masking
Stress & Relaxation

One Full Hour CD of gentle, soothing rain and white noise.

Great for:

Falling Asleep
Sound Masking
Stress & Relaxation

One Full Hour CD of crickets, night insect sounds and white noise.

LAST MONTH'S WINNERS

The winners of the Seal Surfer book in the August issue were: E Payne from Lancashire, B Murphy from Hull, G Forgan from Buckinghamshire, R Middleton from West Yorkshire, A Cook from Hants, D Blakeman-Barrett from Stafford, C Bingham from Gainsborough, N Blyth from Kent, C McDonald from West Yorkshire and D Burgess from Kent.

The winner of the Ezy-Reach was M Layden from Worcester.

The winners of the Easi-Grip Cultivator were: C Neale from Poulton-Le-Fylde, J Alexander from Manchester, K Pearson from Sunderland, D Grosse from Nottingham and R Potter from Ayrshire.

DN next month

All the best news, views, jobs and offers. On sale 28 October



BERT IS BOSS

DN appoints its first guest editor – Bert Massie, chairman of the Disability Rights Commission. For one month only, he will be in charge of content and will ask:

- Young disabled people – how they can be motivated to take up campaigning?
- Tom Shakespeare – in the light of his new book *Disability Rights and Wrongs*, what role does the social model have in disability today?
- The government and campaigners – whether and how disabled people will be supported by the forthcoming single equalities commission.

to enter

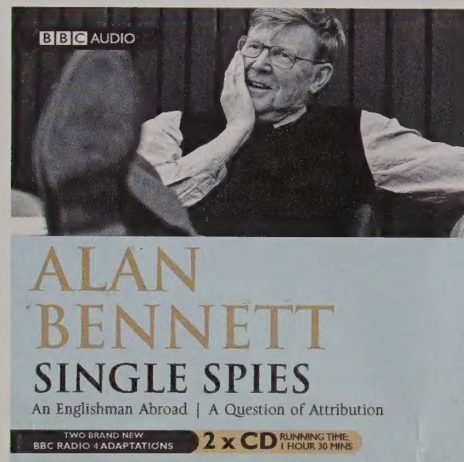
Tick the competition circle below, add your details, and send for FREE to *Disability Now*, Freepost WD4323, London N7 9BR, or you can fax it on 020 7619 7331, or email the details to: suzan.hillman@scope.org.uk

BBC ☐ White Noise ☐ Nuro ☐



terms & conditions Closing date for entrants: 27.10.06 • Entrants must be over 18 • No proof of purchase required • UK entrants only • No cash alternatives • Winners notified by post • Editor's decision is final • Special offers not open to DN staff or associates • Winners may be announced in DN • In association with BBC Audiobooks, YourFavouriteShop.com and Nottingham Rehab Supplies. We may use your name and address for further marketing purposes. Please tick the box if you do not wish your details to be included ☐ Please cut around the edges.

STORY TIME



Thanks to BBC Audiobooks, DN is giving away three of Alan Bennett's Single Spies CDs, *An Englishman Abroad* and *A Question of Attribution*, worth £12.99 each.

In *An Englishman Abroad*, double agent Guy Burgess is confined to a squalid flat in 1950s Moscow. When actress Coral Browne arrives, Guy is eager to know about English society gossip, and cajoles her into taking home measurements for a new pinstripe from his London tailor.

Professor Anthony Blunt, respected as a pillar of the Establishment, in *A Question of Attribution* holds the position of Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures. The Queen finds him replacing one of her favourite Titians. The painting is a fake but Her Majesty may also be aware that her enigmatic servant is not what he seems.

To win, tick 'BBC' in the entry form.

To find out more about BBC Audiobooks titles, visit www.bbcshop.com

VW Shuttle

Excellent vehicle for Wheelchairs

Based on the ever popular T5, this VW Shuttle is an excellent vehicle for wheelchair accessibility. With easy access, good visibility, flexible seating arrangement not to forget ultimate comfort and maximum safety, the Shuttle is a must for those looking for more internal space.



Specialising in creating quality vehicles to suit everyday life

Minibuses, Wheelchair Accessible Cars and Mini Bus Conversions, Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles, Bespoke Conversions including Mobile Classrooms, Ambulances and Security Vehicles.

Call 01626 853050, for a brochure and friendly advice.

Website: www.gmcoachwork.co.uk Email: sales@gmcoachwork.co.uk
G.M. Coachwork Ltd. Teign Valley, Trusham, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 0NX

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Demonstration Available
Nationwide Home



Different by Design

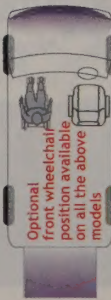


VW Caravelle Executive

Top of the range luxury with the award winning Caravelle range. Up to six seats, manual or automatic with several different engine sizes, as well as rear or side wheelchair access.

Seating Options

With a wide range of seating configurations available.



Optional front wheelchair position available on all the above models

Citroen Dispatch



From only
£14,450



VW T5 Cruiser MkII

Based on the stylish and spacious VW T5 window van. With 4-8 seats (including wheelchair user) and available in manual or automatic, short and long wheelbase with three different roof heights.

Renault Kangoo



Special Offer - free metallic paint, air conditioning and alloy wheels on Kangoo Expression 1.5D and 1.6 Auto only

Citroen Berlingo



Reduced - now from only
£12,495



All new from Lewis Reed the Volkswagen

Caddy Life with the exclusive

Torspring Ramp and Flexi seating system

Torspring
Torspring

Flexi-seat
seating system

See the difference, request a brochure or free no obligation home demonstration today. Call 0845 345 0127 (lo-call rate) or visit www.lewisreedgroup.co.uk

Enjoy the difference



DN

disabilitynow

£1.80 October 2006

Bringing down the house

BB's Pete on tabloids, Tourette's and tough decisions

Orange Saturday

But Liberty runs out of juice

WISE UP TO WORK
8-page employment supplement



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